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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM.

THE POETRY REVIEW

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THE POETRY OF HARDY

BEAUTY is the living spirit of Thomas Hardy's work, both in verse and in prose: it shines through his characters, it glows in his images, it burns in his passion. Everywhere, throughout his novels, tales, lyrics, dramas, there breathes an aura of wonder, romance;—as always in true works of art life seems to put on an unearthly shape. His figures belong to eternity. As Blake says: "Nature has no supernatural, and dissolves; imagination is eternity." Hardy perceives in life a sorrowful loveliness; and his mind endows it with a new, original charm—original because he finds out and hears the yet uncaught melodies of life—strange harmonies, and still—though dimly, unconsciously, even unwillingly felt—unmistakable and true.

He looks into present life, in his novels and poems—or into the dusk of years, as in *The Dynasts*, or even into legendary love—as in *The Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*—and in all these enigmatic loves and hates, in this bravery and treachery, in this bold defiance and fear, he tries to read the runes of destiny and interpret them. He stands perplexed. Silent are the Heavens to his anxious soul. There is a shadow on his spiritual landscape, a weird cloud is brooding over his thought—the thought of a mind in pain, agony, despair. Life is reflected in his work as in a black obsidian mirror. A sense of doom is always weighing upon him, upon his personages. He is walking along forbidding ways, through shuddering woods, in a black frost; it is a maze of dreariness and desolation, he goes on in depression and anguish, and every step but leads him deeper and deeper into the labyrinth, among the black mirrors of blind pools, utterly alone, on an unknown star. His soul is confronted by the unknowable, his look cannot pierce through the web of life, is baffled by the intricacy of the mysterious ways of God. While to the believer a spiritual light illumines with jewelled rays the whole frame of things, from atom to star, from the clod to where suns are born and die, there is no gleam of truth for the thinker without the aid of Revelation. Death does not count much

with him; the greatest reality is pain, and it arouses the main problem of life: why was man born to suffer? And not only this question, but a deeper one looms out of his dark meditation: has this cry of pain an empty resonance? For the mystic, every sorrow, insult, offence, "the slings and arrows" of the world, will be, when suffered with patience, refulgent gems in his future crown. But what are they to the agnostic poet? Cruel blows, blindly given; who gets them, so much the worse for him. The supreme bitterness of his outlook is summed up in Tristram's dying words: "Nor life nor death is worth a special quest."[1] For Hardy, the soul has no whither; and yet we feel that in all its wanderings and strayings his mind is looking for an eternal daystar and an everlasting sea—the star of Divine Love—the sea of Infinity, we perceive that he is searching to find out the moral significance of actions—is longing for rest after failure and disappointment—and that in his winter afternoon of driving rain and gusty wind there is an anxious glimmer of a serene, radiant heaven beyond the gloomy sky.

His aim is to express the pathos of life; and he strives to work into his phrase, with the utmost precision, sincerely, plainly, his thought and his emotion. He is master of a verse in which the music is less explicit than in the lines of other poets, yet is clearly felt; although there are harsh inflexions in his voice, there is a singing in his verse. He is a follower of Wordsworth in so much that he does not look for ornate words, but uses a plain, everyday language. There is a kind—if I may call it so—of *rough preciousness* in his form. Never is it common or vulgar, though often hard; still, when we listen carefully to his wistful airs, we notice, even in the apparently inharmonious passages, that a melody resounds above the grating whisper of the line. Certainly, however, we rarely feel the incantation of a verse, as we do in W. B. Yeats or A. Symons. Perhaps he was—to use a phrase of Francis Thompson—"over-deliberate in expression." While he aims at the most expressive sim-

[1] Thomas Hardy, *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*, London, Macmillan, 1926, p. 77.

plicity, at an utmost sincerity to mood, emotion, sensation —and often attains it—with precise and unusual epithets, with a forcible use of idiomatic speech, yet now and then the voice of passion is clogged by the heaviness of stress, by touches of crudity ; not seldom does he sacrifice the accent of rhythm to the accent of sense ; and therefore he fails to translate his feeling into lyrical music. His ideal of perfection in style is a close truth to nature, but without excluding imagination ; on the contrary the imaginative faculty plays a predominant part in his poetical compositions ; he is highly passionate in his treatment of homely subjects ; common, everyday life is transfigured by a peculiar magic, by a fantastic ardour. Nevertheless, we do not find the true lyric rapture in several of these poems ; they are full of strange meditation, of deep thought ; but is thought set to a tune—as it always ought to be in a poem—or does it simply remain an idea expressed in clear, stern words ? When he blends intellectual vision to inmost music he reaches his highest power, which is a kind of mournful ecstasy.

They are songs of thwarted love, of love long dead, of fickle passion, of cruel playing of fate with suffering hearts ; hence the intense emotional quality of his verse, hence it is why threadbare words are surrounded by an atmosphere of haunting suggestion, hence, also—although rather often his lines are clumsy and do not soar, entangled by a laboured phraseology—the moving power of these poems, born of an unsparing sincerity in thought and expression. In simple, but all significant phrases—in a form shorn of ornament, but moulded into poetical expression by a rare metrical skill—he reveals to us his inmost heart. We recognize in his lyrics a mastery in shaping the language to his need, in a rude way, as a man hammering iron rods into twisted rings and volutes, with a strong hand and sure blows. The long and minute analyses of feeling in his novels are here condensed in vivid flashes. A careful artist, working on a genuine impulse, he endeavours to express the motions of his soul with literal accuracy ; there are no ornaments of conventional form in his lines ; and, in spite of twists of

language and of strained and tormented utterance, they keep the freshness of improvisation.

He uses the traditional patterns of metre, in a great variety of forms; in *The Dynasts* blank verse alternates with the lyrical measures of the choruses; in his poems we notice several kinds of strophes: tercets, octosyllabic quatrains, five-line stanzas; some lyrics are in long, slow-swinging, twelve-beat verses, some in very short lines.[1] We find sonnets and ballads. He employs but sparely the refrain; he produces subtle effects with sudden changes in the rhythmical movement; and his choice of the metre always appears happy and spontaneous; it seems to be prompted—inevitably—by the subject itself. We feel now and then the bondage of rhyming, the halting of the line hampered by the fetters of rhythm, the awkward fall of some cadences, an effort in the lyric phrase almost as if he spoke an unfamiliar language. In *The Dynasts*, his line reminds us of Milton's in its concentration of thought, its careful construction, its austere harmony.

He does not seem to care about form, and yet he is never indifferent to technical beauty. A conscious and deliberate artist—at his happiest when employing a simple and lucid language and a plain syntax—he achieves the precise eff he wants to produce with a fine sense of the value of wo and their arrangement. There is no dissonance betwee sound and feeling, meaning and measure. Though he may sometimes appear clumsy and uncouth, and to work with such abrupt touches that several of his poems retain on their surface the marks of the chisel, his lyrics have a peculiar finish and an individual character; though elliptical, his form is never vague or meaningless.

The impression is conveyed to us in a novel form, queer, yet never artificial, with a bold energy, a spontaneous ingenuity.

> "The swallows flew *in the curves of an eight*
> Above the river-gleam
> In the wet June's last beam;—

[1] Thomas Hardy, *Collected Poems*, "*The Burghers*," p. 20; "*The Homecoming*," p. 234; "*Had you wept*," p. 357; "*Lonely Days*," p. 617.

Planing up shavings of crystal spray
A moor-hen darted out
From the bank thereabout,
And through the stream-shine *ripped* his way." [1]

His poetic diction is unadorned, yet never common; in spite of his apparent homeliness of speech, in his treatment of diction he strongly deviates from ordinary usage; there is a kind of awkward straightforwardness in his address.

Not seldom there is in his work a stern beauty, resulting from the bold strength with which content-matter, feeling, and phrase are shaped, with a sure, exultant touch, into verse, as in :

At whiles or short or long,
May be discerned *a wrong*
Dying as of self-slaughter; whereat I
Would raise my voice in song.

We perceive his mastery in word-painting in some fine rendering of the scenery in *The Dynasts;* for instance, in the view of the battlefield of Austerlitz or in the description of the prisoners in the marshes of the Island of Walcheren :

" Lit by the low sunshine of an evening in late summer; the horizontal rays from the west lie *in yellow sheaves* across the vapours that the day's heat has drawn from the sweating soil;—*brass-hued* and *opalescent* bubbles, compounded of many gases, rise where passing feet have trodden the damper spots; at night the place is the haunt of the Jack-lantern." [2]

The few details he picks out blend into one vivid impression

But far more wonderful are some word-pictures in his novels, which come to us with the surprise of unexpected beauty—the scene, deep-mirrored in the poet's heart, being rendered with a concise and suggestive style, creating an exquisite emotional effect in trained sensibilities. Thus in *Far from the Madding Crowd* :

" The strange, luminous semi-opacities of fine autumn afternoons and eves intensified into Rembrandt effects the few yellow sunbeams which came through the holes and divisions in the canvas, and spirited like gems of gold dust across the dusky blue

[1] Thomas Hardy, *Collected Poems*, London, Macmillan, 1923; " *Overlooking the River Stour*," p. 452.
[2] Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts*, London, Macmillan, 1924, p. 250.

atmosphere of haze pervading the tent, until they alighted in inner surfaces of cloth opposite and shone like little lamps suspended there."

He is particularly happy in evoking the expression of a visage with odd and striking similes :

" Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles solved years ago ! " [1]

" The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die ; "

" And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing."

Very often an idea is shaped into an image, presented to us with admirable directness and made visible to the inward eye with increased intensity. Thus in *Old Furniture* :

" I see the hands of the generations
That owned each shiny familiar thing
In play on its knobs and indentations,
And with its ancient fashioning
Still dallying :

Hands behind hands, growing paler and paler,
As in a mirror a candle-flame
Shows images of itself, each frailer
As it recedes, though the eye may frame
Its shapes the same." [2]

In some descriptive passages, as in:

" And the sun was white, as though chidden of God." [p. 9.]

"The spray sprang up across the cusps of the moon,
And all its light loomed green
As a witch-flame's weirdsome sheen
At the minute of an incantation scene ;
And it greened our gaze—that night at demilune ; " [3]

we recognize the influence of Browning, a poet with whom he shares a predilection for direct, idiomatic utterance and an apparent carelessness in the shaping of the lyrical phrase. A strong, imaginative power blends with strict realism in such pictures as *Snow* :

[1] *Collected Poems, Wessex Poems, " Neutral Tones,"* p. 9.
[2] id., *Moments of Vision*, p. 456.
[3] *Human Shows*, London, Macmillan, 1927, p. 178.

" Every branch *big* with it
Bent every twig with it ;
Every fork like a white web-foot ;
Some flakes have lost their way, and *grope back upward*, when
Meeting those *meandering* down they *turn* and descend again."
[*id.*, p. 69.]

A fantastic weirdness predominates in :

" I view the evening bonfires of the sun
On hills where morning rains have hissed ;
The eyeless countenance of the mist
Pallidly rising when the summer droughts are done." [*id.*, p. 43.]

while a striking exactness, obtained by a bold and vigorous use of language, appears in :

" On the frigid face of the heath-hemmed pond
There shaped the half-grown moon :—
And the wind flapped the moon in its float on the pool,
And stretched it to oval form ;
Then corkscrewed it like a wriggling worm ;
Then wanned it weariful." [*id.*, p. 29.]

Some lines from his Italian sketches well illustrate the exactness of his word-painting I alluded to just now, which brings out the characteristic features of each place ; from " Torino's track " he reaches " multimarbled Genoa " ;

" Out from *a deep-delved way* my vision lit
On housebacks pink, green, ochreous—
Where *a slit*
Shoreward 'twixt row and row revealed *the classic blue* through it ; "

of the eternal city he says :

" These *umbered cliffs* and *gnarls of masonry*
Outskeleton Time's central city—
Whereof each arch, entablature, and dome
Lies bare in all *its gaunt anatomy*." [1]

An artist constantly in direct contact with country life, he can draw from it images highly original in their simplicity ; this may be seen in some of his tropes, as in the simile—gorgeous in its rusticity—he employs for Shakespeare :

[1] *Collected Poems, Poems of Pilgrimage, " Genoa and the Mediterranean,"* p. 91—*" Rome, Building a New Street in the Ancient Quarter,"* p. 93

" So, like a strange bright bird we sometimes find
To mingle with the barn-door brood awhile,
Then vanish from their homely domicile—
Into man's poesy, we wot not whence,
Flew thy strange mind,
Lodged there a radiant guest, and sped for ever thence." [1]

He condenses his bitter views on love and life in these sour madrigals, in these lyrics poignant with sharp irony, short and eloquent like epitaphs, often aiming at dramatic effects, surrounding these tragedies, told with epigrammatic brevity, with an imaginative atmosphere. A characteristic example is *Seen by the Waits* :

" Through snowy woods and shady
We went to play a tune
To the lonely manor-lady
By the light of the Christmas moon.
We violed, till, upward glancing
To where a mirror leaned,
It showed her airily dancing,
Deeming her movements screened.
She had learnt—we heard when homing—
That her roving spouse was dead :
Why she danced in the gloaming
We thought but never said." [1]

Of this sarcastic character are most poems in *Time's Laughing-Stocks*, a series of bitter anecdotes, sometimes accompanied by a cynical moralizing. While in his former lyrics we often meet with a sense of pity, with a sensitive and restrained form and an elegiac tone, we only find here the sheer brutality of statement, the direct utterance answering sharply to the directness of thought and emotion. In the following poem a melancholy smile, half-humorous and yet infinitely sad, lightens up the psychological background.

" That love's dull smart distressed my heart
He shrewdly learnt to see,
But that I was in love with a dead man
Never suspected he.
He searched for the trace of a pictured face,
He watched each missive come—

[1] *id., Satires of Circumstance*, p. 370.

He dogged my feet to the city street,
He followed me to the sea,
But not to the nigh still churchyard
Did he dream of following me." [1]

This vision of a love rooted in pain and error, and yet constant and enduring, may be contrasted to the conception in another piece,[2] a lyric woven with fine metrical skill, where Echo holds up her musical mirror to the poet's passionate questionings, showing him the anxious faces of his illusions in black aureoles of despair, pointing out to him inevitable wrongs and mistakes that are beyond the power of wisdom, revealing to him with the reverberations of his own words the future veiled from his sight, and thus stirring up a fear and horror of love :

How much shall I love her ?
For life, or not long ?
Not long.
Alas ! When forget her ?
For years, or by June ?
By June.
And whom woo I after ?
No one, or a throng ?
A throng.
Of these shall I wed one
Long hence, or quite soon ?
Quite soon.
And which will my bride be ?
The right or the wrong ?
The wrong.
And my remedy—what kind ?
Wealth-wove, or earth-hewn ?
Earth-hewn.

The idea that life beyond the grave endures only by the power of love is finely expressed in the lines bearing the title *Her Immortality* ; [3] the woman lives on solely by the remembrance of the poet, whose longing keeps her shade in the world of the living ; her spiritual shape does not exist in an eternal springtide, but it lingers in the loving

[1] *id., Satires of Circumstance, " Her Secret,"* p. 343.
[2] *Human Shows, " The Echo-elf Answers,"* p. 201.
[3] *Collected Poems, Wessex Poems*, pp. 48-50.

ecstasy of the poet, like a flame within a flame, the wedded soul shares the man's own life, breathing, so to say, with him, and will fade away for ever at his death.

> " Upon a noon I pilgrimed through
> A pasture—
> Unto the place where last I saw
> My dead Love's living smile.
> I lay and thought; and in a trance
> She came and stood thereby.—
> ' A Shade but in its mindful ones
> Has immortality;
> By living, me you keep alive,
> By dying you slay me ' ;—
> When I surcease,
> Through whom alone lives she,
> Her spirit ends its living lease,
> Never again to be."

In *The Dynasts* he sums up and expounds, more clearly and explicitly than elsewhere in his work, his conception of the universe. He tries to search the dim infinities of space and time to find the Beginning and the Cause, the inexhaustible source of Life, the Power who creates and destroys—he endeavours to discover the reason of the immutable Law, eternal, divine, and gazes intently into the tumult and splendour of life, yearning to read its secret. The plan of the tragedy is to show, focused in a momentous time in the history of the world—Napoleon's triumph and downfall—a representative image of human life and of the plan of the universe. It is a cosmic view, his thought winging its vertiginous flight through interstellar spaces; yet he *will not* see how stars keep their lawful orbits, he closes his inward eye to the magnificence of Order in the Creation. Like Schopenhauer, he feels that there is a power, an inscrutable force, ruling spirit and matter, an Immanent Will, a Will to Live, even if living implies suffering—a blind Impulse craving to manifest itself in a shifting *Vorstellung* or Representation, through all beings, through all worlds and times. Yet no design, no preconceived plan of the universe is apparent. On the contrary, he sees, with Schopenhauer, that the very essence

of life is at strife with itself; and that only renunciation can give rest to the living being. And, inevitably, there comes a sense of horror in this contemplation, as in the conception of some cruel, monstrous cosmogony of ancient India.

The dramatis personæ are historical personages and abstract entities; the latter are symbolic; the Spirit of the Years, of the inevitable course of fate as manifested in events—the Pities, of the poet's compassion for human sorrow—the Spirit Sinister, of a cruel joy in evil. Over the whole universe there broods the shadow of the Immanent Will. The stage is decked for tragedy; all Europe in the throes of death is spread before us; above it, the supernatural beings, watching, more or less impassive, the doings and sufferings of men; the background is a tapestry woven of blood and tears, of thwarted hopes and despair. Like Goethe's *Faust*, it is an epic conception in dramatic form; the grandeur of the play comes from the inner conception rather than from the outward form.

The way Hardy draws Napoleon's figure is rather questionable; he seems to minimize his gifts, his genius; with a deeper insight Manzoni, in his beautiful ode, pointed out his superior mind as one which the Almighty Giver "stamped with a larger imprint of His creating spirit." Forgetting his undaunted heart and his love for his country, Hardy shows him worn with vain endeavour, blind to any lofty ideal, intent only to work out a sordid plan of conquest. He does not, however, forget his genius in strategy and the arts of war.[1]

"As the play stands," says Bennecke, "it is dramatically a small formal unit, but ethically a headless torso."[2] Yet,

[1] *Chorus of the Years:*
Recording Angel, trace
This bold campaign his thought has spun apace—
One that bids fair for immortality
Among the earthlings—
It will be called . . .
A model for the tactics of all time;
"The Great Campaign of that so famed year Five,"
By millions of mankind not yet alive.
[p. 61.]

[2] *Thomas Hardy*, p. 236.

although his thought is in the main, destructive, he cannot cancel the eternal moral law printed in our soul, he cannot wipe out of our heart the heavenly luminous writing: *signasti super nos lumen tuum.* In spite of his agnostic conception of life, he must admit a moral ground—must distinguish between sin and purity, righteousness and crookedness, cruelty and mercy. The sense of right and wrong cannot be stifled; in vain some thinkers tried to go "beyond good and evil"; Nietzsche's mind broke down in the attempt. Yet, what is the Immanent Will but a conception prompted by his subconscious feeling of God? His soul, confronted by the Incomprehensible, is bound to admit—if reluctantly—a Power supreme, a supreme Wisdom that does not ask approval of the mind of man. Although he is far from the belief in a Heavenly Father, in God's redeeming Love, he cannot but feel a mystic Presence in the world, among men, in his own soul—cannot but behold visions of mercies and charities. Even while his mind is caught in many a subtle snare, woven by pride, and is entangled in doubts while searching the inviolate Sanctities, he must needs feel the mysterious ruling forces like the rushing of invisible mighty wings; even while listening to the wailings and moanings of the world's perennial agony, he cannot help perceiving—if faintly—the unity of God's design; on earth he *must* see it, and in the spaces all around it, in the mighty streams of stars. Against the grim background of fate his vision of life—a vision of flaming passion and sorrow—stands out, illuminated by a mysterious glow. The world is like a bleak spring day—bleak—yet, of spring. At times we hear in his lines an elusive chanting, as of joy trembling in tears. He would fain believe in a future happiness for the world, but cannot descry any sign of it; still, there is a glimmer of hope in the songs of the Pities, there are dawning splendours in their voices. He cannot believe in a final disaster; and in these songs he expresses a vague, tremulous hope of man's advancement and betterment, a spiritual sunrise heralding peace and happiness. A radiance is thrown on the stage by the song of the Pities at the close of the drama—a faint

radiance—mere footsteps of light upon dark, deep waters; yet it is light, if but a dream of light.

Although there is in him no belief in another world, eternal, beyond the grave, reverent is his attitude before death, of which he feels the solemn majesty, the transfiguring power to a higher beauty, made of awe and infinity; look at the portrait of the dead Eustacia, listen to what he says in his poem *The Casterbridge Captains:*

> " Yet saw he something in the lives
> Of those who had ceased to live
> That sphered them with a majesty
> Which living failed to give." [1]

The presence of death stirs up his yearning to immortal life:

> " In graveyard green, where his pale dust lies pent
> To glimpse a phantom parent, friend,
> Wearing his smile, and ' Not the end ! '
> Outbreathing softly; that were blest enlightenment." [2]

In some stanzas of the *Song of the Pities*,[3] adorned with splendid flashes of imagination, he states the belief which he would fain accept: man and his cosmic frame as a living unity progressing to a glorious issue—a creed in striking contrast to his scepticism.

> " Thy systemed suns the skies enscroll
> Obey Thee in their rhythmic roll,
> Ride radiantly at Thy command,
> Are darkened by thy masterhand.
> And these pale, panting multitudes
> Seen surging here, their moils, their moods,
> All shall ' fulfil their joy in Thee,
> In Thee abide eternally.'
>
> Exultant adoration give
> The Alone, through Whom all living live,
> The Alone, in Whom all dying die,
> Whose means the End shall justify."

Throughout *The Dynasts*—and in several of his later poems—we descry that he is tending to an interpretation

[1] *Collected Poems*, p. 43. [2] *id.*, *Wessex Poems*, " *A Sign-Seeker*," p. 44.
[3] *The Dynasts* p. 523.

of life akin to Browning's: i.e., that earthly imperfection is only a preparation to perfection in a future life, and that pain is the necessary means to lead man on to the right upward path, to lift his soul, to unfold "the wings that sleep in the worm."

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony might be prized?"[1]

There is something immortal in nature, which the poet, engrossed with his reveries, does not perceive in the spring morning, in budding thicket and building birds and glistening sea, but which God reveals to him in after years, in dim recollections of that scene, where he now feels something divine and everlasting.

"Not much, some may
Incline to say,
To see therein, had it all been seen.
Nay! he is aware
A thing was there
That loomed with an immortal mien."[2]

Nature he loves, looks at her beauty with admiring eyes, loves its very mystery; a brother to suffering things, he would fain assuage their pain; he listens intently to the voice of the great winds, to the silence of the night pregnant with a divine message, gazes with wonder and awe at cloud and flower, waiting for a revelation of the spirit latent under material appearances. In the fine epilogue to his poems he says of himself:

"When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay—
If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, 'He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he is gone.

[1] *Abt Vogler*, ix.—cf. *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.
[2] *Collected Poems*, p. 312.

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
'He was one who had an eye for such mysteries?'" [1]

It is in his contemplation of the starry darkness that he most intensely perceives—as may be seen in the passage of *Far from the Madding Crowd* where Oak is watching his flock at night—that contrast between nature's vast and lasting splendour and the little, transient misery of man which Young has so finely expressed:

Why this so sumptuous insult o'er our heads?
Why this illustrious canopy displayed?
Why so magnificently lodged despair?

Yet he endeavours to find a unity in the essence and workings of nature and man, a kind of eternal transfiguration in shapes and colours and sounds, a manifold change, but in a unique, wonderful rhapsody. This concept appears in the lyric *In a Museum*:

"Here is the mould of *a musical bird* long passed from light,
Which over the earth *before man came* was winging;
There's *a contralto's voice* I heard *last night*,
That lodges in me still with its sweet singing.

"*Such a dream in Time* that the coo of this ancient bird
Has perished not, but is blent, or will be blending
'Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard,
In the *full-fugued song of the universe unending*." [2]

But, side by side with this compassionate feeling, represented by the Pities, we have, as a violent reaction to it, a proud outlook on the universe, crudely expressed by the Spirit Sinister and by the Ironic Spirit; the poet's mind only perceives the shadow of evil on it, regarding it with dissatisfaction, almost with contempt, as an intolerable blunder.[3] From looking at events with vigilant eyes he

[1] *id.*, *Moments of Vision*, "*Finale*," "*Afterwards*," p. 521. [2] *id.*, p. 404.

[3] *Spirit of the Pities*:
Why prompts the Will so senseless-shaped a being?
Spirit of the Years:
I have told thee that It works unwittingly,
As one possessed, not judging.
Ironic Spirit:
Of Its doings if It knew
What It does It would not do.

cannot derive any knowledge of a supernal Wisdom, and see any significance in the doings of men and the workings of nature. To historians like Hume or Carlyle facts are at least obscure symbols of a Law that transcends human reason, to Hardy they are merely idle, meaningless hieroglyphics drawn by a listless, invisible Hand.[1] Universal life, as he apprehends it, may be ruled by an indifferent, unconscious power, or by a wicked, pitiless one, whose cruel wounds no Saviour's hands can heal. With such a conception there can be no love towards the Divine, not even any *Amor Fati*. With such a distrust in the leading Force he cannot bow to his mysterious ways, as a believer does, he cannot entertain, in Patmore's words,

> This subject loyalty which longs
> For chains and thongs
> Woven of gossamer and adamant
> To bind me to any unguessed want, and so to lie
> Between those quivering plumes that thro' fine ether pant
> For hopeless, sweet eternity.

The Immanent Will appears then as a strange and terrible ruler, that stirs in us horror and alarm. "If men are parts of It," says the Spirit Sinister, "I am afraid of them." [2]

[1] *Spirit of the Pities:*
Meet is it, none the less,
To bear in thought that though Its consciousness
May be estranged, engrossed afar, or sealed,
Sublunar shocks may wake Its watch anon?
Spirit of the Years:
Nay. In the Foretime, even the germ of Being,
Nothing appears of shape to indicate
That cognizance has marshalled things terrene,
Or will (such is my thinking) in my space.
Rather they show that, like a knitter drowsed,
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,
The Will has woven with an absent heed
Since life first was; and ever will so weave.
[p. 2.]

[2] *Spirit of the Pities:*
They are shapes that bleed, mere mannikins or no,
And each has parcel in the total Will,
Spirit of the Years:
Which overrides them as a whole its parts
In other entities.
Spirit Sinister:
Limbs of Itself:
Each one a jot of It in quaint disguise?
I'll fear all men henceforward. [p. 4.]

It is a useless world, or, at least, its purpose is past human reason. The historical period that the poet is portraying in his drama is only the thin edge of the web incessantly woven through space, a tiny bit of the starry, incommensurable woof; the Napoleonic wars are trifling episodes in the epic of the cosmic struggle written in cryptic type in the skies, where birth-flowers and death-flowers are blossoming through æons in the vast shuddering darkness, fiery portents in orchards of gloom, peopled with demons and seraphim. Says the Spirit of the Years:

> " Thus doth the Great Foresightless mechanize
> In blank entrancement now as evermore
> Its ceaseless artistries in Circumstance
> Of curious stuff and braid, as just forthshown.
> Yet but one flimsy riband of Its web
> Have we here watched in weaving-web enorm,
> Whose furthest hem and selvage may extend
> To where the roars and plashings of the flames
> Of earth-invisible suns swell noisily
> And onwards into ghastly gulfs of sky,
> Where hideous presences churn through the dark.—
> Yet seems this vast and singular confection
> Wherein our scenery glints of scantest size,
> Inutile all—so far reasonings tell. [p. 521.]

His mental attitude is somewhat akin to Omar Khayyám's, who, in his fatalistic acquiescence, wavers between scorn of a scornful ruler:

> But leave the wise to wrangle, and with me
> The quarrel of the universe let be:
> And, in some corner of the hubbub couched,
> *Make game of that which makes as much of thee,*

and acknowledgment of a supreme and secret Wisdom:

> The ball no question makes of ayes and noes,
> But right or left as strikes the player goes;
> And He that tossed thee down into the field,
> *He knows about it all—He knows—He knows!*

Yet, what in Omar sounds like trust in his Maker, appears

in Hardy as a very dim and doubtful guess,[1] which can only be lit up by the lamp of a trembling hope :

> " Though times be when the mortal moan
> Seems unascending to Thy throne,
> Though seers do not as yet explain
> Why suffering sobs to Thee in vain ;
>
> " We hold that Thy unscanted scope
> Affords a food for final Hope,
> That mild-eyed Prescience ponders nigh
> Life's loom, to lull it by-and-by." [2]

He often stands gazing backwards to a sorrowful past, groping among regrets,[3] raising echoes of beauty fled and perished grace and buried love. And in almost every one of these little lyrics—grey and poisonous as adders—there lurks a sense of infinite bitterness. It is a poetry of thought —of reasoning on feeling, rather than of feeling. Fate appears to him as an unconscious spoiler of human happiness, an inevitable, inexorable Chance, bringing disaster ; most of hi lyrics are tragedies condensed in a few stanzas, the poet summing up, with intense brevity, a sad even', an irrevocable doom. And the persistent thought of death sheds a ghostly radiance over his lines. Life is to him like an ancient text, a moth-eaten scroll, a half-cancelled manuscript, of which he vainly tries to fill up the gaps, to elucidate the difficult, meaningless passages, suggesting words or twisting the maimed phrase to his liking but the text remains full of contradictions and inconsistencies. He sees mankind among tormenting, malignant powers ; he is confronted by a hard, inexplicable reality ; what looks sometimes like a spire of incense in the dusky place where he is groping his way—a breath of incense, a mystic, religious idea—turns out to be a wisp of mist. He endeavours to

[1] *Spirit of the Years :*

> Nay, blame not. For what judgment can ye blame ?—
> In that immense unweeting Mind is shown
> One far above forethinking ; purposive,
> Yet superconscious ; a Clairvoyancy
> That knows not what It knows, yet works therewith. [p. 99.]

[2] *Semichorus I and II of the Pities*, p. 523.

[3] *Collected Poems, Time's Laughing-Stocks, "The Voice of the Thorn,"* p. 216; *At Waking,"* p. 208.

tear out the heart of the mystery, searching the woof of events, the darkest depths of the soul, with an effort constantly renewed; yet in vain. To his mind without faith universal life is a nightmare trance—an evocation of some unknown sorcery—a phantom world which has an only reality: pain. The two main problems he sets to himself are: sorrow—and the plan and goal of the universe; what is the aim of physical, and, above all, spiritual suffering, of the pangs of love and hatred? and whither is tending the development of universal life? what is the hidden purpose of it all? Perhaps everyone, unconsciously, works and suffers to the completion of a mysterious plan, determined by the Immanent Will; and, of course, there is no question of free will in man. And, as regards our knowing power, is reason an insufficient light—or, rather, is it merely a lure of the Will to Live—a toy given us to solve—in an illusory way—the riddle of life?—We have in these lyrics sombre drawings of lives tossed by the wind of circumstance, by the mysterious power that twists together the human souls, or rends them asunder, as the wind does with twigs and boughs in a thicket—binds them together with love, tears them asunder with rivalry and hatred. While to the believer life's dissonances only heighten its harmonies, his agnosticism causes him to perceive merely the discords. The scheme of life is a mournful pattern, and man is a being schooled to resignation by the persistent rod of fate, by an inscrutable law. And yet there are some gleams of a supernal light in these dusky pictures, there are translucencies in the dead opals of these pensive, sad lyrics. This aspiration to the beyond is alive in every poet's heart, however dark his outlook on life may be; from the beauty of nature he can argue a superior, supernal beauty. The poet, as Blake says, "can enter into Noah's rainbow, and make a friend and companion of one of these things of wonder, which always entreat him to leave mortal things."

To aspire to the beyond: there lies the main difference between the mystic and the materialist thinker; while the former feels himself a caged soul, struggles with his earthly fetters and yearns to eternal freedom, the latter is content

to sit behind the bars, feeling himself, apparently, at home. Hardy is like a man wandering through a dim, terrible country, knowing no whence or whither, yearning to be "anywhere out of the world"; when deeply conscious of his vain effort to understand the universal plan, he bows before the supreme Power, to whose mysterious design everybody and everything is instrumental. In *The Masked Face*, a typical allegory of his mind's attitude, he says:

"I found me in a great surging space,
At either end a door,
And I said: 'What is this giddying place?'—
'It is Life,' said a mask-clad face.
I asked: '*But how do I come here*
Who *never wished to come;*
Can the light and air be made more clear—
And the doors be set wide? They numb
Fast-locked, and fill with fear.'
The mask put on a bleak smile then,
And said: 'O vassal-wight,
There once complained a goosequill pen
To the scribe of the Infinite
Of the words it had to write
Because they were past its ken.'" [p. 490.]

Let us call this attitude of Hardy's mind his hopeful mood; more often he sinks into a desperate agnosticism. And not only his soul and life, but nature itself is an unsolvable riddle.

"When I look forth at dawning pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree,
All seem to gaze at me...

Upon them stirs in lippings mere:
We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!

Or come we of an Automaton
Unconscious of our pains?—

Or is it that some high Plan betides,
As yet not understood,
Of Evil stormed by Good,
We the Forlorn Hope over which Achievement strides?

Thus things around. *No answerer I.*" [p. 58.]

Hardy's utter agnosticism shows more impressive and

striking when compared with Leopardi's; the Italian poet has at least a conviction; he believes in "an ugly power," that, hidden, rules so as to bring all mankind to sorrow, feels that he is destined, together with the world, to an unchanging torture; Hardy would fain entertain some creed, however grim and cruel, but cannot; he does not see any definite purpose for joy or pain in the laws of life:

> "If but some vengeful god would call to me
> From up the sky, and laugh: 'Thou, suffering thing,
> Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy'—
> Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
> Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;—
> But not so.—
> *Crass Casualty* obstructs the sun and rain,
> And *dicing Time* for gladness casts a moan.
> These *purblind Doomsters had as readily strown*
> *Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.*" [p. 7.]

Somewhat incongruous to this final despair appears the thought—presupposing a watchful care of both nature and man—that the human soul and the universe are no stranger to each other and both are in a transitory, imperfect condition, waiting for mutation; the poet's mind throws a bridge across the silent abyss between human spirit and star; he has a prescience of a better state, shows confidence in a future change, a transformation tending to an ultimate aim. A star looks down at the poet and says:

> "Here I and you
> Stand, each in our degree:
> What do you mean to do?"
>
> I say: "For all I know
> Wait, and see Time go by,
> Till my change come."—"Just so,"
> The star says: "So mean I." [1]

This thought of a necessary change sometimes leads him up to a feeling of hope, to the view of existence under the beneficent guidance of a principle of harmony, to a contemplation of eternal justice which makes him forget the martyrdom of life, and entertain a belief in the divine order of the world; the perplexing and gloomy conception is

[1] *Human Shows*, p. 1.

mastered; the sky is no more opaque and bare of omens, but translucent and shows him a star, a symbol of hope, almost a sign of victory—a star which he cannot fail to see, a promise of peace, and, perhaps, happiness, an inducement to go on and fight the battle to the end.

"For Life I had never cared greatly,
As worth a man's while;—
In earliest years—why I know not—
I viewed it askance;——
Anew I found nought to set eyes on,
When, lifting its hand,
It uncloaked a star—
And showed its beams burning from pole to horizon
As bright as a brand.
And so, the rough highway forgetting,
I pace hill and dale—
Regarding the vision on high,
And thus re-illumed have no humour for letting
My pilgrimage fail." [1]

From the idea of a universe certainly not in a static perfection, but in growing improvement, Hardy steps on to a more joyful and firmer hope, from a suggestion of the Supernatural to the conception of an Intelligence, until he comes—if not to perceive the divine sagacities of Providence—to see the world as the work of God's hands, Consciousness being the aim of the Unconscious. He cannot remain deaf to these lofty insinuations, to the song arising from the very ground of our being, and, solving all contradictions of the cosmic riddle, his mind, which declines to accept defeat, rises to a transcendental, vital truth, clearly and definitely voiced in the closing chorus of the Pities.[2]

"Now a stirring thrills the air
Like to sounds of joyance there,
That the rages of the ages
Shall be cancelled,
And deliverance offered from the darts that were;
Consciousness the Will informing
Till it fashions all things fair."

F. OLIVERO.

[1] *Collected Poems, Moments of Vision*, p. 505.

[2] *The Dynasts*, p. 525.

RUPERT BROOKE AND FLECKER

THE MEN AND THEIR WORK

SCEPTICISM always, criticism often, have been the accompaniment of innovation. It is, accordingly, quite in the best tradition that we find a certain fashionable tendency to lament the supposed decay of English poetry as understood and interpreted by its present exponents, somewhat inaptly termed the Georgian school of poets. Whether or not these same Georgians have successfully produced an art which will measure up to that infinity of severe tests used in determining, first, whether it exists as such, secondly, its particular degree of merit, will be the final judgment of time, and time alone. Undoubtedly, however, in the persons of Rupert Brooke and Flecker, death robbed the movement of two of its most brilliant spirits, the permanent value of whose later work seems definitely established.

The promise of their earlier years was more than fulfilled in the short age of their maturity, and it takes no great degree of faith to assume that the coming years, with the restraint and richness of experience in their train, would have brought their art to still greater heights and have rounded off many of the angles and corners of adolescence. Death struck both when, after a period of apprenticeship and of experimentation, of wrestling with the mere technique of their art, its new rhythms and altered conceptions as regards subject-matter, they had just found their bearings. Both had their growing pains, as witness Brooke's 1905-1908 volume and Flecker's *Bridge of Fire*—both had turned out a fair amount of mediocre verse. But in its final phase their poetry had a quality of sheer felicity attained only when lofty and dignified conception is expressed in faultless, adequate language.

What disappointment and sickness did for Flecker, the War, in a few short months, did for Brooke. Under its influence he matured and found himself after years of restless mental wandering; under its influence, too, he produced nearly all his greatest poetry. In his later work the poet has outgrown his early spirit of introspection, and

his theme, instead, has partaken of the Universal and Eternal. One has the feeling that he has definitely bound himself to the service of the world, that he is less concerned with searching self-analysis than with interpreting the elemental desires and sorrows, joys and attainments that endure through all ages and are the heritage of all mankind. The development of Flecker and his art is always more gradual and the shadow-line between its various phases is never clearly defined. He is seldom as violent, never as crude as Brooke, and while towards the end there is an immortal ring about such poetry as *The Burial in England*, written on his deathbed, we find no counterpart to the excesses, nor the somewhat puerile attempts to startle, which characterize much of Brooke's earlier work.

Succeeding generations are usually more concerned with a man's work than with its author, and there seems little reason for believing that either Rupert Brooke or Flecker will prove an exception. Some reference, therefore, to the men themselves, before the radiance of their personalities is dimmed with age, may help us to appreciate more clearly what they were striving for, to judge how fully each attained his object. Some mention of the emotions and events amongst which they lived may help us, too, to understand why they were thus striving.

* * *

Both were public school and University men, Brooke being educated at Rugby and Cambridge; Flecker at Uppingham and, later, Oxford and Cambridge. Born in 1887 and 1884 respectively, both matured at a relatively early age, with the result that their rapidly awakening temperaments were cradled in the vitality and rocked by the revolt of the New Poetry. Both were catholic and voracious readers, both were widely travelled, a combination responsible for the richness alike of their language and imagery. Both grew up into young manhood amid the wonderful spiritual peace of those twentieth-century years immediately preceding the War; amid, at the same time, an atmosphere of intense mental stimulation. They died

within a few months of each other—Brooke in the Gallipoli Expedition in 1915; Flecker, of consumption at Davos, also in 1915. One can hardly avoid being struck by the contemporary similarity of many of the plain facts and circumstances of their lives, which stand out the more by contrast with the startling dissimilarities both in the men themselves and in what they wrote. In looking back it seems borne in upon one very clearly that the real birth of their genius and the explanation of the essential differences, both in its form and matter, may be traced back to those early University days. Cambridge as indubitably left its mark on Brooke as did Oxford on Flecker, for Flecker, though later at Cambridge, was never really at home there, nor entered into the spirit of its life.

Brooke's poetry bears, almost to the end, an exuberance, a freedom, a sparkling vitality that, while inborn and part of him, can hardly but have been intensified by the Cambridge atmosphere. In the four years, 1902 to 1906, that Flecker was at Oxford he seems to have caught much of its spirit of classic dignity and restraint, of its profound respect for craftsmanship and style, for the chiselled phrase, the polished line. We feel even, at times, that the motivating thought is with him of lesser relative importance than these. Brooke's poetry is the poetry of youth, riotous, carefree, exultant youth, just as Flecker's is a poetry whose whole aim and object is the expression of beauty, a beauty albeit, that is sometimes "statue-cold." Where Brooke is personal and rather alarming, Flecker is impersonal and restrained; where Brooke falters, and rebels against the disillusionment of love and death, the mutability and decay of all things earthly, Flecker marches along clear-eyed and intent of purpose upon the pursuit of beauty. He seems concerned less with the why and wherefore of life and the hereafter, than with the mere fact that things are as they are because they are. He deliberately and of intent purpose sets out with the creed that it is no part of the poet's business to preach gospels or carry a message, and his poetry, as a consequence, is always and at all times, a

thing apart from any philosophy or any attempt to solve the mysteries of life. Towards the end he gives some faint premonition of an impending change, and *Hassan*, though essentially an expression of beauty in its appeal to the emotions, dramatises, at the same time, an intensely spiritual situation. Flecker himself never enlightens us as to whether the moral theme is conveniently hung on the clothes-peg of æsthetic fancy, or this last merely an adornment for a philosophical hat-rack. One may pardonably infer the latter.

While the circumstances of their lives made insularity of taste inevitable, similarity of taste and outlook were, for the same reason, equally impossible, an outstanding exception being the love for England and the English countryside, which, in one form or another, runs through much of what they have written. Though their natural differences in other respects were to a certain extent crystallised during their University careers, they were undoubtedly still further accentuated by their choice of literature.

The classics appear to have played only a small part in Rupert Brooke's development, but his reading of English literature, both prose and verse, was varied and extensive. He soon outgrew a youthful phase of decadence and a taste for Ernest Dowson, Wilde, Yeats, and Watson, and it seems probable that his lasting appreciation and admiration for the Elizabethans began in his second year at Cambridge, when he joined what afterwards became known as the Marlowe Dramatic Society. He appeared first in *Faustus* as Mephistopheles, later in *Comus*, acting with considerable, if not conspicuous, ability, heightened by his obvious sincerity. It comes, indeed, as no great surprise to find a Cambridge contemporary recognising about this time "that English literature was now, for him, more important than the ancient classics." His critical faculties, in so far as they determined his maturer literary likes and dislikes, were fast becoming attuned to the man's real self and any permanent predilection for the classics could only have been alien to his nature. Off and on, during the remainder of his Cambridge days, he was studying the

Elizabethan drama, and later, moving to London, spent much of his time poring over Webster texts in the British Museum. Apparently he was headed in the right way, in the direction, that is, best adapted for the exercise of his natural capabilities, for though taking the Classical Tripos in the summer of 1909 and getting only a Second, a few months later he won the Charles Oldman Shakespeare prize.

His attraction to the Elizabethans is easy to understand, and seems, in fact, one of those things that was from the first almost inevitable. The vitality and richness, both of language and image, of the Elizabethan drama were bound to make their appeal to a nature surcharged as his with the ecstasy of life and the mere joy of living that seems to have been reborn, 350 years later, in this young Georgian so marvellously alive to the freshness and material experiences of existence. For the perceptiveness and sensibility of the Elizabethans to the world material was, surely, another link in common with the author of *The Great Lover*. We know, too, that he envied and marvelled at another phase—the lyrical—in which the Elizabethans succeeded so happily. Referring to " Elizabethan Song-books " he says : " I read them when I ought to be learning German, and I writhe with vain passion and with envy. How did they do it ? Was it, as we're told, because they always wrote to tunes ? The lightness ! " It was, perhaps, for their essential strength and firmness of expression that he admired the Elizabethans the most, and, strangely enough, we find that the coarseness of their drama, inseparable from and indeed part of its extraordinary vitality and robustness, has a counterpart in such poems of Brooke's as *A Channel Passage*, *Dawn*, and *Jealousy*. But whereas in the case of the Elizabethans it seems to have been the obverse side of the penny, a defect, so to speak, of its virtues, in the case of Brooke, it sprang partly from a spirit of bravado and desire to shock, partly from the realism inherent to the New Poetry, partly also because of his genuine interest in—not affection for—anything ugly.

It is impossible to underestimate, much less lose sight of

or ignore the influence of his Elizabethan scholarship on what Rupert Brooke himself has written. It is little in evidence in his earlier work, 1905-1908; we find traces of it in the 1908-1911 section, as for example in such lines as "When the high session of the day is ended," and:

> "Such long swift tides stir not a land-locked sea.
> On gods or fools the high risk falls."

but, towards the end of 1913 and the early part of 1914, while he was travelling in the Pacific, it has become more noticeable—in lines like the following from *The Great Lover*.

> "And these shall pass,
> Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
> Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
> To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
> They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,
> Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
> And sacramented covenant to the dust."

In a sonnet—suggested by some of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research:

> "Spend in pure converse our eternal day;
> Think each in each, immediately wise;
> Learn all we lacked before; hear, know, and say
> What this tumultuous body now denies."

and in such random, isolated lines as:

> "Out of the wash of days and temporal tide."

> "There the sure suns of these pale shadows move."

His choice of adjectives, his diction, his brief, certain stroke of description, "his rush of words, especially verbs"—all these add to a Shakespearean similarity of effect. By the end of 1914, it was insistent, and we find it, time and again, in the five sonnets which appear under the heading "1914." The underlying conception of the two beginning: "Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead," and "If I should die, think only this of me," is typically Shakespearean. We can imagine Shakespeare not only writing such lines—if he had had the thoughts behind them—in the same language, using

the same words, the same condensation, the same absolute directness of phrase, but at the same time actually conceiving these self-same thoughts. It does not seem extravagant praise to apply to "1914" Wordsworth's valuation of Shakespeare's sonnets: "In no part of the writing of this poet is found, in equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings, felicitously expressed."

While a fairly simple process of synthetic and analytical reasoning suffices to show us Brooke's debt to the Elizabethans, a casual application of similar methods to Flecker's poetry will scarcely bring parallel results. In the first place, Flecker was far too original and mentally fertile to be satisfied with anything the derivation of which was at once obvious, far too critical to be content with anything as it stood, at least if and when assimilated for his own literary purposes. Secondly, the very cosmopolitanism of his reading, and his consequent familiarity—to a far greater extent than in the case of Brooke—with the literature of various nations and schools, militated against any clearly defined similarity, whether in treatment, phrasing, diction, colouring, rhythm, or any of the weapons which are part and parcel of the poet's armoury. One of his outstanding characteristics was his ability to assimilate—by reading——a multiplicity of different poetic styles and conceptions, without at the same time being dominated by any one of them. At no time can we label him definitely or permanently Parnassian or decadent, classicist or symbolist, much less realist—at least in the, at times, ultra-Georgian sense of the word. With Hérédia and Catullus, Théophile Gauthier and Theocritus, Leconte de Lisle and Paul Fort, Goethe and Petrarch, Cervantes and Shakespeare, Baudelaire and Moréas, as well as numerous Oriental writers, he was intimately acquainted. French and Roman, French and Greek, French and again French, German and Italian, Spanish and English, and yet more French, all these went into the melting-pot and emerged fused in the white heat of his poetic genius—almost indistinguishable in their final fusion.

Beyond question, however, the strongest and most durable influences are three: the Classics, the French and the Oriental, and of these, the more obvious Oriental is relatively the least important. Superficially, perhaps, one might be inclined to think otherwise, so repeatedly is the Oriental *motif* in evidence. As a boy of fifteen, he was attracted by the colour and pageantry of the East, and this early passion seems to have grown in depth and intensity until—he went there, and returned somewhat disillusioned. Even before the natural course of his life led him to the Orient, he was constantly studying its literature, his interpretership work at Cambridge giving him further opportunities in this connection. Sir Richard Burton's *Kasidah* was an early favourite of his; Omar Khayyám, Mardrus's *Arabian Nights*, *Anthologie de l'Amour Asiatique*, by Adolphe Thalasso, gathered from all four corners of Asia, were also among the many he had read and cherished.

While this constant mental association and, later, personal contact with the Orient, made naturally some impression on Flecker himself, it was an impression wholely sensuous, at no time either mental or spiritual. He was obviously attracted—and which of us is not—by the glamour and opulent beauty of the Orient, but too vigorous, mentally and spiritually, to be engulfed in its submersive fatalism, too European to accept its philosophical merging of Spirit and Matter. In his own words:

> "My star was a conquering star,
> My element strife,
> I am young, I am strong, I am brave."

In his poetry, too, the Oriental strain is more apparent than real, as far as any deep significance is concerned. His art was enriched by the Orient, only to the extent that we, who can read and appreciate his, at times sad, at times majestic, but always intensely beautiful Oriental vignettes, are enriched. To Flecker, the Orient was only another background against which a riotous imagination could project new and richer creations, only another world of colour and language to conjure with. At no time did it

affect his art fundamentally, or, more important, his conception of what art should be, and what he himself, therefore, was striving to attain. One of his finest achievements —*Hassan*—is an excellent illustration of this point. We are fascinated by its delicate beauty, amused by its stinging wit, aroused, uncomfortably perhaps, by its grotesque barbarity, saddened by the futility of the struggle portrayed, all of these brought out admirably in Oriental images and anglicized Oriental phraseology, but yet, with and in spite of all this, *Hassan* is not one whit Oriental. The thought behind it, the main one, as well as the many others that are worked in, is neither Christian nor Mohammedan, Buddhist nor Hindu, Eastern nor Western: it is Universal, the eternal, age-old conflict between idealism and materialism. Had Flecker had the same attraction for, and the same knowledge of Spain, say, as he had of the Orient, the theme in *Hassan* could and probably would have been worked out against a Spanish setting.

Flecker's debt to the classics, as well as to French literature, particularly the Parnassian school, is so generally recognized and has been, moreover, so adequately commented upon, as to make more than passing mention superfluous. Briefly stated, he owed to the latter—not as a disciple, but more as a co-worker—his conception of the function of poetry, and a consciousness of the meaning of "perfect artistry"; to the former, the clarity and compactness of expression and thought that characterizes all his work, as well as an abiding passion for workmanship and detailed perfection. If proof of the foregoing were needed, it is provided, surely, by nearly all the poetry he ever wrote, supported by his Samarkand preface, in which he explains very clearly and unequivocally his attitude towards the Parnassians and "the single intention of creating beauty" with which his own volume had been written.

* * *

Brooke and Flecker were as dissimilar physically as they were in nature and temperament, and, consequently, in their reactions to life. This latter is particularly interesting,

because while we find in Brooke's poetry a spontaneous reflection of the material and spiritual emotions of his life, there is little inkling in Flecker's of the ordeal he went through.

Life, it is hard to think otherwise, was, on the whole, kind to Rupert Brooke. He was, in the first place, " both fair to see and winning in his way "—his personal charm seems unquestioned—and reading his biography one gets the impression that life for him was one new and intoxicating experience after another. He excelled in most things, and in England he was perpetually surrounded by a circle of friends and admirers who, if they did not tell him in so many words, at least gave him to understand that Rupert Brooke was a rather wonderful young man and a wholly admirable poet. Even in the manner of his death, fate was kind to him ; for what more fitting end to a dramatic and intense life than under arms in far away Gallipoli, amid the glamour of war.

Contrast Flecker. Beginning, perhaps, with his failure to get more than a third in Greats and followed by his subsequent inability to support himself by writing, life for him was one disappointment after another. After successfully passing an examination for the Consular Service, and leaving for Constantinople, he appears to have enjoyed a short period of content and happiness. In addition to the satisfaction of feeling that he was fulfilling his official duties competently, he had leisure for literary pursuits, and, for the first time, he was able to see the Orient at first-hand. A swim in the Black Sea, however, brought on consumption, and the remainder of his life was divided between alternate phases of acute suffering and increasingly shorter and rarer periods of better health. After a brief treatment in a Cotswold Sanatorium, followed by a marked improvement, he returned to the Near East—Smyrna. A relapse soon set in, and he writes to his father and mother : " All my life is utterly ruined—I've broken down with consumption again." A short respite followed, a visit to England, Beirut again, and another attack of illness. His doctor

advised Switzerland and, accordingly, in June, 1913, Flecker found himself at Leysin, never again to see either England or the Orient. The remaining few months of his life were spent in one sanatorium after another—first Leysin, then Montana, Locarno, and finally Davos, where he died. One's sympathy and admiration go out to him, fighting for his life, with at least partial financial dependence on his parents weighing him down, under the most depressing conditions it is possible to imagine, all of these aggravated at the end by the War and the feeling of enforced isolation at the time when England needed him most. To the end he remains unconquerable, his spirit resolute and defiant, never a hint of weakening to be seen except when his passionate homesickness and longing for England breaks out in *Brumana* which starts "Oh, shall I never be home again?" and ends with the poignantly beautiful lines:

> "Half to forget the wandering and pain,
> Half to remember days that have gone by
> And dream and dream that I am home again."

In two issues of Georgian Poetry, Rupert Brooke and Flecker may be found almost side by side. While Brooke as the modern high priest of the Georgian faith seems admirably in place, Flecker appears rather forlorn and lost amid his "entourage." Whatever else he may have been, he most emphatically never belonged to a school whose essential creed is poetic liberty and license, and who ruthlessly sacrifice form in an attempt to attain strength and realism.

If comparison, in spite of what we are told, is not necessarily odious, neither does it follow that it necessarily serves a useful purpose, and so without any attempt to weigh the respective poetic merits of the one against the other, a few remarks in general about Rupert Brooke's and Flecker's poetry, may not be wholly out of place. It may be said immediately that the differences in their art are as great as the fundamental differences in the men themselves. Brooke was more interested in concrete life and people than in abstract thought. "I want to walk 1,000 miles, and

write 1,000 plays, and sing 1,000 poems, and drink 1,000 pots of beer, and kiss 1,000 girls, and—oh, a million things," he wrote to a friend. There we have Rupert Brooke in a nutshell. Poetry with him, we cannot help feeling, was to a certain extent incidental, so intense was his pre-occupation with the exciting business of living. Flecker on the other hand, was first, last, and always, and in every sense of the word, the typical man of letters. His development as such is both clear and easy to follow. It began with his early passion for translation, which lasted right to the very end of his life and which, both directly and indirectly, influenced every phase of his development. It is in this abiding passion for translation and for the sound of words and names—particularly Greek and Oriental—that we find in him a certain love for his *métier* for its own sake alone. Translation, too, was for him a veritable whetstone for the knife which he applied so thoroughly and relentlessly to all his work. To the struggle of arranging and selecting words to conform with a prescribed meaning, which could not be altered, he owed much of his exacting workmanship and accuracy of expression. His poetic genius is never more clearly shown than by the fact that, in spite of this assiduous polishing and re-polishing, his poetry, thereby, lost but little of its original vigour and freshness.

Flecker and his art were, if not always at least nearly always, detached. Poetry, for him, except in very rare instances, as when an overmastering emotion, such as homesickness, could no longer be contained, was a thing wholly apart from himself. Brooke, on the other hand, was seldom able to forget himself. Or, to put it another way, Brooke's poetry was generally inspired by personal emotion and experience—as often the latter as the former —and only came into being as the direct result of these. As a consequence, we can never quite forget in reading his poetry, that it was written by a young, not unattractive, rather self-conscious poet, overflowing with vitality, named Rupert Brooke. At its worst, it is always interesting,

because the man who wrote it was himself so intensely individual and interesting. Poetry for Brooke was life as he reacted to it. With Flecker it was irrespective of life, a mental picture, without other rhyme or reason than the creation of beauty.

Desire and attainment are inevitably asymtotic in the life of any artist worth the name, and if, as a poet, Flecker more nearly succeeded than Brooke in attaining what he was striving for, it was only because he knew, more certainly than Brooke, what he was striving for, and how to get it. Just as Brooke was beginning, under the influence of the War, to realize the value of the dignity and restraint that at times he lacked, so pain and sorrow were leading Flecker to a deeper understanding of mankind, and to a broader vision of the ultimate purpose and possibilities of poetry.

EDWARD ARNOLD BLOCK.

MORTALITY

"*Pulvis et umbra.*"—HORACE.

NONE shall penetrate the mask . . .
Until the last long desperate breath
Until the last symphony is sounded.
I shall go smiling—
Into the great beyond.
Looking upon the Silence as release,
Looking upon the darkness as a dream.
Looking upon the deep unknown as rest. . .

There will be none to know . . .
The infinite impassioned Silence
Will hold me fast—
The passionate solitude of my soul
Will be unbroken to the end!

Gayly I went
With laughter on my lips
(Tears but a hidden truth)
And when the long Night covers me

Youth will be calling in my veins—
Love will be revelling in my dreams—
Beauty will be my body's pyre
Remembering all the lone, the long
The easeless years that are no more. . . . .

It will be good
To join hands once again with Silence
(Silence from which I came)
Calm, easeful Silence like a mother's breast—
And to depart
From all this vain
This lurid and unsatisfying life—
So sharp, so bitter and so unbenign,
Oh, who would miss the cymbal-sound
Down the long, peaceful way of Death ?

Heart, there is nothing left for your desire—
All things have been possessed—
All gifts, all joys,
All twinging pleasures and all beautiful sorrows.

None shall penetrate the mask . . .
Unbroken to the end—
Unto the last, immitigable hour
When Silence will enfold me once again.

BLANCHE SHOEMAKER WAGSTAFF.

DREAMING

I SAW her in the moonlight pale,
A cloud of stars around her head,
Her eyes were soft with sleeping dreams,
Her lips traced smiles of words unsaid.

I saw her in the moonlight pale
Beneath a slender willow tree,
I left her where my dreams delight
To play the game of memory.

IRENE OLDERSHAW.

A NOTE ON THE SCOTTISH REVIVAL

IT always seems a little difficult for the English to take Scotland very seriously. The Scot, as he is represented in the kindly pages of *Punch*, for example, has rather made England lose sight of the Scotsman as he really is. Not that this mildly chaffing attitude implies any lack of respect. On the contrary. The English only laugh when they feel respect. Otherwise they are grimly silent, and that is why they can also laugh heartily at themselves.

Of course, the danger arising from this otherwise harmless tendency, is that certain types may become stereotyped —like the traditional Scot or Irishman (even one may add John Bull himself) when the type itself has changed or disappeared and thus important developments pass unperceived. This has happened elsewhere, notably in Ireland, where a new and different Irishman has arisen who has left the light-hearted irresponsible Paddy of tradition far behind. Or, perhaps, he is really the same Paddy with a difference—only it is just the difference which eludes us. These traditional types do, superficially, catch certain abiding traits so faithfully that their victims cannot always recognize themselves. But after a time some of these even superficial traits become less true. And this is what is happening in Scotland to-day.

I feel myself particularly well-placed as an observer, since I occupy what I can only call an amphibious position between the two countries which has brought me into closer contact with that more serious, starker, side of Scottish character, which is not (naturally) shown in *Punch's* Scotsman or in most of the literature readers in England—casual readers I mean—are apt to regard as representing Scotland—the stark, tenacious aspect, that is what you find in the Ballad poetry—a strange mixture of glamour, realism, romance, tenderness, pity and terror—with that underlying current of grim humour and clear common sense—not to be found in precisely the same form elsewhere. Well, this serious, fiercer side of the Scottish character is hardly recognized outside Scotland

—nor even very widely in Scotland itself. It shows itself most clearly at the moment in the renewed national sense of a wide-awake, eager minority who are tired of the patriotism which expresses itself in yearly Burns' dinners, weakly sentimental or facetious dialect verses, or the tartan ornaments displayed at the tourist season in Princes Street. There exists a determined reaction against the complete commercialization of Scotland and the drowning of what is still left of a noble national tradition in a muddy cosmopolitan stream. But by no means all Scotsmen feel in the same way. The movement, led by a few, is certainly gathering force and attracting more and more, into its eddies, those who have been hitherto careless or indifferent. Little is known of the movement in England as yet, but it is significant and important enough to deserve attention. It is in their first and glowing stages that these movements often are most interesting, before they have hardened into definite shape. This Scottish revival is, of course, akin to the Irish movement, though possessing its own native technique and expression.

I am not concerned with its political side for the moment, but rather with that light breeze of poetry which stirred the somewhat stagnant waters of Scottish literary life a few years ago and now is swelling into a full breeze. This creative, poetical impulse went largely with the conviction that the old, genuine Scottish speech was being neglected, misused and degraded, and many Scots were determined on rescuing it as quickly as possible from the flood of pseudo-English which was everywhere (and is still) drowning the vernacular. It was also very rightly felt that Scottish poetry did not begin and end with Burns—and that the country had perhaps lain hypnotized and silent for too long under the spell of a great name. The beauty and importance of Middle-Scots was also emphasized—language, rich, sonorous, and dignified as Latin, a wonderful medium for any poet capable of using it, as Dunbar and Fletcher for instance did, in a royal and sumptuous way.

I am not myself—to my loss I feel sure—a student of Middle-Scots and I appreciate the difficulties it presents to

the casual and easily frightened reader—but I have heard it very beautifully read and did homage to its grave and sombre beauty. The ordinary vernacular beside it is like home-spun compared to brocade. I can enter into the feelings of those who feel that the poems written in it are like royal and priestly robes folded away in a treasure chest in an attic in order to make room for artificial silk and false pearls. It is hardly possible to use Middle-Scots again even for literary purposes—though one contemporary poet, Mr. Lewis Spence, has done so very effectively and has recaptured the sumptuous spirit of these early writers in verse like a Scottish claymore in a Renaissance scabbard.

I suppose, though, that the restless stormy genius of Mr. C. M. Grieve may perhaps be said to epitomize the movement in its more untamed aspects both literary and political. He represents an unknown vital, fiery and uncompromising quality of which we may certainly expect to hear a good deal more in this country and beyond. His wild, chaotic poem, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, is a bitter challenge to the conventional, satisfied Scotland of to-day with which he will have no truck whatever. The vernacular is here used cubistically—if one may so express it—Scotland is shown from a new distorting angle by a relentless lover. If the poem is incoherent, like lava pouring out from a crater—well molten lava *is* at least a thing to be reckoned with.

Revivals, literary and political, always go hand in hand because they are different expressions of the same impulse. The National Party has sprung into being—surprising many as a hawk might hatched from a pheasant's egg. The two movements considered side by side, help to explain and amplify each other. This revival of Scots letters is not literary *merely*, but part of an emphatic and serious reassertion of nationality. With this at any rate—apart from the political aspect—I am in complete sympathy. Scotland's tradition forms a heritage too noble to be bartered without protest for a trashy cosmopolitan mess of pottage. But this danger of course does not threaten Scotland *alone*. *All* nations are threatened in the same

way. London itself is rapidly becoming the Little Brother of New York. So those perils which the leaders of the movement are, I think, sometimes too apt to ascribe to English influence, are really a threat of world-wide standardization in which England also shares. It is excellent though if any nation will at least challenge the rising tide. Canute is after all one of the best remembered of the kings. No cause is ever lost as long as it finds defenders. There is a certain exhilaration in defying the mounting waves instead of tamely descending from our thrones to paddle in them. Besides under the spell of cosmopolitanism, national character still breathes with surprising vigour often enough. Let us therefore praise those who continue to dig air-holes in order to save what remains beneath the surface from complete suffocation.

The storm-centre—if it may be so perhaps melodramatically described—is, it goes almost without saying, Glasgow, that town of warm life, quick response and mental eagerness. Edinburgh (to which I am deeply attached) is, I must admit, a little cold by comparison. Dare I say that Edinburgh always reminds me of a beautiful, stupid woman and Glasgow of an ugly and intelligent one ? But this is widely and dangerously digressing. Anyhow, it is Glasgow that provides the fervour and ferment of the movement. I love life, even though I may not agree with some of its manifestations, and I am glad that fate has allowed me to see Scotland in a wakeful and alert mood. This mood as far as literature is concerned shows itself most clearly in poetry. Neither fiction nor drama has played as yet any large part in it. Perhaps, in these respects, the shadow of Calvin still overpowers even the most emancipated. New poets appear, however, with almost dazzling rapidity. These vary as to merit, naturally, but they are all aspiring and few of them complacent or satisfied. Their very patriotism will, I fear, prevent many of them from being much, if at all, read, even in their own country. The vernacular is prohibitive to most strangers.

But it is interesting to note, and another proof of its vivid expressiveness, that poets who use it with force and

originality, usually become tame and dull when they write in English. Professor Alexander Gray has boldly translated Heine into Scots with amusing, wholly delightful results, which he would not have obtained from English. Burns failed in the same way. He reminds me in his English poems of a man cutting artificial roses out of paper —all the virtue at the touch of English seems to go out of him. A few poets can write equally well in both languages, it is true, notably Mr. Lewis Spence and Mr. Robert Crawford.

A word must be said in praise of the Porpoise Press and the enterprising young publisher—Mr. Charles Graves, himself a poet, who runs it. Surely a poet publishing for poets is an ideal for the realization of which the world has always waited! He stands as a kind of Fairy Godfather to the aspiring company of young Scots poets (and some English ones as well) whose work—without his Press—might never have seen the light, or at any rate not in such comely dress as he bestows on it. Decidedly, appearing almost miraculously, Mr. Graves is the right man at the right moment. Some of his publications contain verse which should not be ignored by any lover of poetry who is responsive to such signs of youthful renewal. This garland of northern singing flowers deserves a welcome. Some will fade, but flowers which bloom with difficulty in the north when they do appear are apt to be everlasting flowers—outliving, it may be, some of the softer blossoms of easier summers.[1]

MARGARET SACKVILLE.

[1] A paper read for the Poetry Society on November 21st, 1928.

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The most judicious, balanced, realistic re-creation of Byron's life in the form of fiction is to be found in Howard Gordon Page's *The Shattered Harp* (Alston Rivers) on the special merits of which we hope Mr. Fotheringham, who, by the way, has just compiled a comprehensive Byron Calendar for 1929 (The Poetry Society, 1s.) will have something to say in a later issue.

BUT PLATO

BUT Plato is a dogma : Plato's power
Is weak against this twilight and this hush
When earth and sky and water seem to flush
With some fine sanguine impulse of the hour,
Some blood of meditation that shall flower
Into a flame of stars, into a rush
Of radiant doctrine from a dazzled bush
Where the bird turns his leaf into a tower.

And as for Aristotle . . . Oh but here,
Scenting the sweet-fern and the bilberry blows,
The leopard frog knows more than that Greek knows,
Melodious and squat philosopher :
And still the bush is blazing like a rose—
Take off your shoes : the Lord is at your ear !

JOSEPH AUSLANDER.

SEA GULL

WITH silver wings,
Long limbed and fiery eyed,
The sea gull flings himself
Upon the air.

Darting and plunging
Like a living wind,
Graceful and fair
As some immortal god,
He turns, and twists and flutters,
Then is still
As some cold statue
Out of marble carved.

Beyond the hill
The sunset glory shines ;

Upwards the sea gull flies,
As though he knows
The throbbing daylight dies ;

Within the burning beauty of the skies
His wings are stained rose.

SILVIA DOBSON.

BROCELIANDE, OR THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

SECULA semper proficere, " the ages are always progressing," wrote Postellus in 1541, and the words might be taken as the motto of Renaissance Humanism. Not that the belief in progress and " man the measure of the universe " was a new thing—we find it in Pelagius as in Shaw—but it was as fiercely opposed to the *contemptus mundi* of Christian ascetism as it was to the doctrine of degeneration from a golden age. The problems of the Humanist, his art, his science, were incomprehensible to those who saw life as a ceaseless war against the inborn evil in the heart of man. And equally " The questions of original sin, of chastity, of the motives behind Buddhism, etc., all part of the very essence of the religious spirit, are quite incomprehensible for humanism." [1]

Mr. Read, in his *Phases of English Poetry*,[2] recognizes this antinomy and, knowing that it is impossible for any reader to appreciate the solution to a problem which is, for him, non-existent, makes no attempt to study literature which, in the words of M. Bourget,[3] is historical and not actual.

The most remarkable phenomenon in recent English literature has been the sudden appearance of a new criticism, a criticism which Coleridge might have developed had he enjoyed a knowledge of Bréal's *Semantics* and modern psychology. Of this new school, restrained and classical in style, analytical rather than speculative, intellectual rather than emotional, Messrs. Read [4] and Eliot [5] are the acknowledged leaders, and Mr. Read's new book, though short, represents his most ambitious effort.

" My general thesis will be," he says, " that poetry has developed from the widest possible appeal—an appeal commensurate with the community itself—to the narrowest possible appeal—the poet appealing to himself alone." He shows how poetry, on leaving the ballad stage, can no longer appeal to a common experience and a common religious faith, but becomes more and more cultured, allusive, and esoteric until even poets like Jammes, Sandberg, and Kipling, who write with the intention that their poetry

shall be read and adopted by people at large, find that their market, though extensive, is restricted to the middle class. "The real populace—the populace which sings 'Tipperary' and 'Keep the home fires burning'—this populace ignores its self-appointed bards."

In Herbert Read's own poetry[6] there is an utter intellectual honesty which has been missing from English poetry since Donne: it hurts. He accepts none of the short cuts of sentiment or humour; he makes no concession to ignorance or prejudice; he is willing to face the ultimate problems of existence alone. His poetry is necessarily for the few, but that same honesty has made *Phases of English Poetry* a book simple, lucid, and profound. The lyric poet suffers certain limitations: he has to take his words as they exist in his reader's mind and use them ready-made to build his poem. He can, therefore, communicate that poem only to readers whose experience and reading so far resembles his own that their association with each and every word approximates to his; but in a book there is time and space for synthesis. Slowly the author builds up those symbols he intends to use: he takes words coloured in the reader's mind by individual experience; he enriches them by use in context after context until they possess for the reader the exact significance the writer wishes. Then, and only then, he can write, in a few words simple and exact, his whole thesis. So Mr. Read can end his book:

> "But it is just a possibility—and no more than a possibility—that the music-hall song and its allied forms—music-hall patter and revue libretto—contain the germ of a new popular poetry. . . . It will not be an easy victory for any poet: it means a surrender of every personal stand-point, and a sacrifice of all pride of knowledge and intelligence. And at present our very conceptions of the poet and the poet's activity presuppose a condition of pride and of isolation. Inwardly I feel that this life of the intelligence is the only reality, and that the art of poetry is the difficult art of defining the nature of mind and emotion—a veiled activity, leading the poet deep into the obscurities of the human heart. But this is my personal attitude; more dispassionately I recognize that poetry can never again become a popular art until this research is abandoned and the poet gives himself wholly to 'the cadence of consenting feet.'"

Modern Movements in English Poetry and Prose by Sherard Vines [7] affords a useful contrast. It was written primarily as an " up to the minute " guide for Japanese students, consequently it ignores all living writers who are content to use Victorian methods and Victorian matter. The book is a useful work of reference, but it starts nowhere and ends nowhere. It is a text-book and its most striking characteristic is its timidity : it might have been written by any careful reader of the *Criterion*, the *London Mercury* and the *Calendar* (now defunct), and deserves the attention of anyone unacquainted with those periodicals. But Professor Vines is writing *ex cathedra* and cannot afford to be wrong ; nowhere does he speak out unless he feels the forces of Messrs. Richards, Read, Blunden and Eliot massed behind him, and even then there is none of the vigorous hard-hitting metaphoric wit of Wyndham Lewis or Rebecca West. " Now when one picks oneself up after the wind of Dostoevsky's ecstasy has blown over one and counts the spoons there are never any missing."[8] Quite so ; and wit, like ecstasy reveals startling analogies, though unlike ecstasy it emphasizes contrasts in the very act ; but these analogies must be more than verbal. Professor Vines endeavours to evade responsibility by using verbal pyrotechnics, but through the thin smoke of the damp squib we see him pocketing the spoons. When he quotes the cry from the gallery at one of Gordon Bottomley's plays : " They've imprisoned the WRONG Bottomley," his " tendency-wit " hides a personal animosity, not a systematic judgment.

Now I submit that criticism implies good scholarship and something more. Criticism of a work of art is, in fact, a comparison of the values implicit in that work with those accepted by the critic. The intellect alone cannot supply that scale of values : Professor Vines uses his intellect but does not trust his own judgment ; he prefers to quote those of other people. Hence arises the alleged " difficulty " of his poems. Although in his latest book of verse[9] he claims to dispute T. E. Hulme's posthumous dictatorship, his finest passage is still definitely anti-vital, anti-humanistic.

Now earth at length is lovely, now it swings
Free from the taint of excremental things ;
Its purer note (men, beasts, and grass being one
With shipless gulphs and unprolific stone)
All round th' ellipse winds out its organ-cry
To build seven deep a clear polyphony.
Blue pours the unwinged air
In strait, strong tides ; or where
Deep cyclones gather, th' inorganic plane
Fans on their majesty with empurpled beat
And their blue claws tear naked cliffs of slate,
And satyr-lightnings skip across the townless plain.
How bravely, then, on cold denuded strand,
Jostled before the equinoctial gales
Bergs roaring bright will curtsey to the land
And toss the wet, wild iris of their veils
In spouts of grated ice
That shock and impact atomize.

Too often his ideas come out " knocking each other's heads so fast, that they seems to stun one another, you hardly know what he's arter, do you ? " We find quotations from *Henry V* and *Oroonoko* and the *Meaning of Meaning* all jumbled up with fragments of Benn's sixpennies. This feverish desire to " get it all in " characterizes *Modern Movements* also. Let us hope that his next work will be a more detailed study—an account of the new metaphysicals (lately joined by Messrs. Blunden, Monro, and Sassoon), for example.

The sections devoted to Criticism and Prose resemble that already discussed : they are extremely useful and extremely irritating, like an abridged dictionary. The typography of the book is horrid and the binding little better ; it should be contrasted with the fine workmanship of Cobden-Sanderson.

If Professor Vines sins by not attempting to lead us anywhere, Mr. Masefield[10] offends by moving merely for the sake of motion. He has, apparently, decided that a number of the Arthurian legends need to be re-written, and he has also decided that it is time he purged his vocabulary of the words " bloody," " guts " and " Hell." When John Masefield was working in a carpet-factory at Yonkers

he bought a 75-cent Chaucer and decided to become a poet. That first influence has always remained visible in his work: even in a passage recently criticised in THE POETRY REVIEW.[11]

> She was no sister to the hen,
> But fierce and minded to be a queen.
> She wore a coat and skirt of green,
> A waistcoat cut of hunting red,
> Her tie-pin was a fox's head.

Chaucer wrote of everything "That in this world is done of all mankind" (*Assembly of Fowles*, 70). There is a fine wholesomeness and homeliness in his work: he looked about him and found life good: "as freshe as the month of May." Mr. Masefield, too, has often given form and beauty to the things he knows and loves, ships and the sea, the English countryside, foxes and hounds, yet in his apostrophes to Beauty he often fails. Keats's pronouncement on beauty and truth has given rise to a grave confusion of logical, ethical, and æsthetic satisfaction. Often these are in conflict: the major drama of our time is the clash between poetic values derived from a rural past and the recognition of the inevitable urban and industrial future. Out of such conflicts of truth with truth, Tragedy is born. In Tragedy there must be a "real choice between seemingly equal points of honour" as Professor W. P. Ker says.

Mr. Masefield has not thought clearly or deeply on these subjects, and his instinct has always led him into melodrama —aimless, accumulating horror. *Dauber* and *Philip the King* were redeemed by the fine sea passages. In the present work we come suddenly upon:

> As in October when the Channel mist
> With silent swathes of greyness hides the sea
> Until none knows where land or waters be,
> And suddenly a blast
> Scatters and shreds the vapours into twist
> And all is glorious sunlight, wind and foam,
> Through which a towering ship comes striding home,
> Spray to the rail, with colours at her mast;
>
> Or as, in mild November, when the pack
> Whimpers in covert and the hunters wait,

Under slow-dropping oak-leaves falling late,
Making no sound at all,
And suddenly the fox with hollow back
Breaks, with a crying leader at his brush,
And all those riders gathered for the rush
Surge for the fence, not heeding any call,

For the rest, we have Mr. Masefield's newer style, the emasculated commonplace, or school-girl heroic. The book starts with the story of "Old Merchyon, King of Cornwall rich in tin," and tells us

"That baron Breuse, the Heartless, lived with him,
Of all bad men the worst";

Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of Uther and Ygern and the porter is altered to make it more moral (melodrama is always "moral") and the story ends with Uther murdered and Ygern resting beside the Alan:

"There as she watcht the water-eddies whirl,
Often a dark-eyed deer with fawn at heel
Would shyly nuzzle her to share her meal,
And robin redbreasts percht upon her hand."

For John Masefield, that is a novel failure: those robin redbreasts are out of drawing, the associations are all wrong.

The next item is, intentionally I suppose, a nursery rhyme ("I love little pussy, her coat is so warm") describing Ygern's joy at the birth of Arthur and ending:

"But rise, little Arthur,
Like the green corn in pride,
And a Power shall fill you
And a Helper be guide."

We next meet Ygern's half-witted sister Morgause, who is captured and taken to Orkney in rhymed couplets:

"Thither she went: within that stony place
She grew to loveliness of form and face.

And when the seasons made her seventeen,
King Lot of Orkney took her as his Queen."

Later ('Tis the voice of the lobster ; I heard him declare . . .) she seduces her brother-in-law, Prince Arthur,

> " But in Orkney in winter,
> When waiting was done,
> She bare the boy Modred
> From the evil begun,
> And the father, the uncle,
> Had a nephew for son."

The next few poems are propped up with a sparse allowance of Hells and devils, and read like pantomime couplets :

> " Arthur to Hell," said Loki ; " I shall go."
> " Right," Red Fang answered ; " I have warned you though."
> * * *
> After some days, King Loki trod the wracked
> Shell of the city that his grand-dad sacked ;
> * * *
> " Mount," Loki said, " I do not ask advice."
> " Right," the Wolf answered. " Now I've warned you twice."

Swearing may be poor man's poetry, certainly this common speech looks poor and thin without it.

> " Now she is trulling with her master,
> That Lancelot of fame,
> This spotless Queen of Alabaster. . . .
> It is a shame. . . .
>
> It is a shame to them who do it
> And worse to us who see.
> I say, tell Arthur : let them rue it.
> Do you agree ? "

So we work on to a happy ending : the story told by Florilegus[12], *ad annum* 1058, of a young gentleman of Rome and his ring, is transferred to Arthur, but otherwise unaltered. A second version (the accepted) of several of the legends is given in verse even weaker than the first, yet here and there a stark simplicity succeeds :

> Uther drinks and boasts at his board,
> Ygrain sings for her dead lord :
> " Would I were pierced through with a sword ! "

Three short poems, " The Death of Lancelot," " Dust to Dust " and " The Old Tale of the Begetting," are the best because they consistently use the vocabulary of one class of reader. In general, Mr. Masefield wobbles in his appeal as he goes from line to line : a patchwork of vulgarity and poetic licence is not " popular poetry." The legends are given no new significance. Geoffrey's *Chronicle* was intended to be the epic of a united French and English nation. It has failed again :

> King Arthur, growing very tired indeed[13]
> Of wild Tintagel, now that Lancelot
> Had gone to Jersey or to Jerico,
> And there was nobody to make a rhyme,
> And Cornish girls were christened Jennifer,
> And the Round Table had grown rickety,
> Said unto Merlin (who had been asleep
> For a few centuries in Broceliande,
> But woke, and had a bath, and felt refreshed) :
> " What shall I do to pull myself together ? "
> Quoth Merlin " Salad is the very thing,
> And you can get it at the ' Cheshire Cheese,' "
> King Arthur went there : *verily*, I believe
> That he has dined there every day since then.
> Have you not marked the portly gentleman
> In his cool corner, with his plate of greens ?
> The great knight Lancelot prefers the " Cock,"
> Where port is excellent (in pints) and waiters
> Are portlier than kings, and steaks are tender,
> And poets have been known to mediate . . .
> Ox-fed orating ominous octastichs.

MICHAEL ROBERTS.

[1] T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*, p. 8.
[2] Hogarth Press, 1928, 3s. 6d.
[3] *Quelques Témoinages* (Librairie Plon, 1928).
[4] *Reason and Romanticism* (Faber and Gwyer, 1926), *English Prose Style* (G. Bell and Sons, 1928).
[5] *The Sacred Wood* (Methuen and Co., 1920). *For Lancelot Andrewes* (Faber and Gwyer, 1928).
[6] *Collected Poems* (Faber and Gwyer, 1927).
[7] Humphrey Milford, 1927, 7s. 6d.
[8] Rebecca West : *The Strange Necessity*, p. 139.
[9] *Triforium* (Cobden-Sanderson, 1928, 5s.).
[10] *Midsummer Night and other Tales in Verse* (Heinemann, 1928, 7s. 6d.).
[11] R. McDonald : *Masefield's Narrative Poems*, Jan.-Feb., 1928.
[12] Cf. *Anatomy of Melancholy* [Part III, Sect. ii, Mem. I, Subs. I].
[13] By Mortimer Collins (1827-1876).

THE DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY

XX: JUSTICE WENDELL PHILLIPS STAFFORD; AUGUSTUS G. HEATON, PAINTER AND POET; BLISS CARMAN; CARL SANDBURG; MRS. HALL-HAINS' NEW BOOK.

POETRY, Justice, Love and Science, the four fundamental factors in Civilization, are found combined in the poetry of Judge Wendell Phillips Stafford, Association Justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. During Judge Stafford's long and distinguished career—which included having been a member of the House of Representatives of his native state of Vermont in 1892, reporter of decisions of the Supreme Court of Vermont, 1896 to 1900; Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont from 1900 to 1904, and Associate Justice Supreme Court of the District of Columbia since 1904; or 28 years in judicial service—Justice Stafford has been accompanied by poetry.

His poetic works include *North Flowers*, 1902; *Dorian Days*, 1909; *Voices*, a dramatic ode, 1915; *The Land We Love*, 1916; *War Poems*, 1917; and also numerous poems, one of which, *Lindbergh*, shared with Edwin Markham's poem the honours in the contest for the best poem about "Leaders," held by the POETRY REVIEW, during the past year.

Judge Stafford's latest poem, "Night Flying, The Light at Bolling Field," reflects his power to treat a scientific subject poetically:

I watch the monster fire-fly of the night
  Caught in a network of invisible strings,
Making the heavens about him dark and bright
  With the closing and unclosing of his wings,
And think what pilot on the moonless air,
  Stemming the cloudy gulfs where stars turn dim,
Is pulsing towards that intermittent flare
  With eyes astrain for sight of home and him.
How many a pharos of the infant world
  Thus welcomed wanderers from roaring seas
To harbours where the waves were scarcely curled,
  And some white temple where they bent their knees
And hung the gift they vowed in danger sore!
Flash on, far beacon of the sky's green shore.

Justice is impressively epitomized in "Mens Judex":

High on her single-seated judgment throne,
With forward-gazing eyes, girded, erect,
Sits the wide-browed, undaunted Intellect
Resolving her own doubt. Love making moan
Clings round her neck; and reaching to her zone
Pale Pity kneels; and striving to deflect

Her forthright vision Falsehood stands bedecked ;
Blind Rumour's trumpet in her ear is blown,
And with raised hand white Vengeance whispers, „ Slay ! "
Unmoved she sits till Falsehood glides away,
Rumour lets fall his trump, Vengeance his stone,
And Love and Pity turn aside to pray ;
Then, calling back her angels heavenward flown—
Justice and Truth—she hears these two alone.

In the book *The Land We Love*, the dramatic ode, " Voices," which was read by Judge Stafford at the General Campfire, at Washington, we find realistic poetic pictures of our Civil War times that remind us that the author was born in the first year of the War and grew to manhood with the veterans. His stanzas naming the leaders and reflecting the scenes make vivid again those historic events :

Farragut comes with his fighting crew ;
The boys are down from the hills again,
The devil-care riders, and Stannard's men.
Here is rank and file, leader and man,
Hancock and Hooker and Sheridan !
Logan is here, of the raven lock,
Thomas, the Chickamauga Rock,
Kearny, with eye like a sabre-flash,
Sherman, biting his brief moustache !
Grant is watching you, silent and grim,
With the smile of a child in the heart of him.
Give them hurrahs—cheer upon cheer !
No one is missing . . . . Lincoln is here !
Lincoln, my lowliest son,
Whom I exalted then,
My man of griefs, whose face was marred
More than the sons of men !

* * *

Not here alone, on Arlington's famed field ;
Lustred with hero-tombs as night with stars—
Where Gettysburg and ploughed Antietam yield
New spoils each spring, and fairer for old wars—
They sleep the sleep that no detraction mars ;
But, oh, how many humble, hidden spots,
Where but my wild flowers keep their calendars,
Where only wandering vines visit their plots—
Where my blue mountain-skies meet their forget-me-nots !

The sonnet to Lincoln, the martyr leader, follows the patriotic ode :

Say—if men ask for him—he has gone home,
Home to the hearts of all that love their kind ;
And they that seek him there, there shall they find

Their man of men, in all men's hearts at home.
The Mother made him of her common loam
And from her world-wide harvest filled his mind,—
Poured from all paths, that from all quarters wind,
As in old days all highways poured to Rome.
She said: "I make a universal man,
Warmed with all laughter, tempered with all tears,
Whose word and deed shall have the force of fate.
I made not seven in all, since time began,
Of men like these. They last a thousand years.
They have the power to will, the will to wait."

Out of the wealth of charming expressions of love we take this concluding stanza:

Old sweethearts are the sweetest
As all true lovers know.
Old comforts are completest,
In sun or shade or snow.
Say, Sweetheart, is it so?
In grey and golden weather
We two go on together.
Old sweethearts are the sweetest,
As all true lovers know.

Carl Sandburg, who is credited with being a trenchant voice in American poetry, has given us another book: *Good Morning, America* (Harcourt, Brace & Co.). This is the first book of poems since our last review of his books of poems in "Voices From the Great Inland States."

This new volume begins with "Tentative Definitions of Poetry," from which we quote elsewhere. The title poem "Good Morning, America," which was read by Mr. Sandburg at the Phi Beta Kappa meeting at Harvard last June, covers twenty-five pages and sets the stage with this opening stanza:

In the evening there is a sunset sonata comes to the cities.
There is a march of little armies to the dwindling of drums.
The skyscrapers throw their tall lengths of walls into black bastions on the red west.
The skyscrapers fasten their perpendicular alphabets far across the changing silver triangles of stars and streets.

Reviewing the graphic, Whitmanesque pages we will pause to give the "Sleepwalker":

There is a Sleepwalker
goes walking and talking—
We are afraid. What we are afraid of?
We are afraid of what we are afraid of.

We are afraid of this, that, these, those, them.
We are afraid the earth will blow up and bomb the human family out of its sleep, its slumber, its sleepwalking, its pass and repass of shadows.
We are afraid the sky will come apart and fall on us and in a rain of stars we will wash out into the Great Alone, the Deep Dark, saying, "Good-bye, old Mother Earth, we always were afraid of you."

We are afraid; what are we afraid of? We are afraid of nothing much, nothing at all, nothing in the shape of God, man or beast, we can eat any ashes offered us, we can step out before the fact of the Fact of Death and look it in the eye and laugh, "You are the beginning or the end of something, I'll gamble with you, I'll take a chance."

The closing stanza follows:

Sea sunsets, give us keepwakes.
Prairies gloamings, pay us for prayers.
Mountain clouds on bronze skies—
Give us great memories.
Let us have summer roses.
Let us have tawny harvest haze in pumpkin time.
Let us have springtime faces to toil for and play for.
Let us have the sun of booming winds on long waters.
Give us dreamy blue twilights—of winter evenings—
to wrap in us a coat of dreaminess.
Moonlight, come down—shine down, moonlight—meet every bird cry and every song calling to a hard old earth, a sweet young earth.

Among the steadfast friends and writers of poetry in America is Augustus Goodyear Heaton, the artist-poet author of *The Heart of David*, *Fancies and Thoughts*, *The Manner of Freedom*, and other works.

Mr. Heaton, who is a member of The Poetry Society (Incorporated), was the first U.S. student admitted to study at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1864, under Cabanel, and painted in Paris under Bounat, 1878-80; exhibited in the Paris Salon, 1879-80, and in later years; painted "Washington at Fort Duquesne," for the Union League Club of Philadelphia, 1881; the "Recall of Columbus," bought by Congress for the Capitol, 1883, and engraved on the 50 cent World's Fair Stamp in 1893; and painted many other notable pictures including "The Promoters," in the New Congressional Library, Washington, D.C.

The Heart of David is a scholarly work of close on 400 pages, being Bible chronicles set in order to compass the life and to show the love and zeal of the crowned shepherds of Israel, which he illustrated

with original drawings, which elicited favourable comments from the critics and clergy.

Mr. Heaton's *A Sheaf of Sonnets* has many beautiful Petrarchan Sonnets, one of which, " The Poet's Mission " follows :

The poet shunneth an ignoble mind
Sterile of tender feelings. He is sent
To sing the carols of the innocent,
To voice creation's beauty unconfined,
The bending flowers of his path to bind,
Interpreting the Grace Omnipotent.
He soundeth hearts for every sweet intent
And giveth winged spirit to mankind,
For beauty is but nature's creed of right,
All fancy is dear thought divinely free,
All song a rapture of the soul's delight
When, fondly, peace and love and hope agree,
And God doth give the poet clearer sight
Of loveliness that is and is to be.

William Bliss Carman recalls to the mind that period in the development of American poetry when the word Vagabondia grew to have a charming significance. Vagabondia was a place where all lovers of nature, art and the road might meet. The evolution of Vagabondia begins with the publication in 1893 of *The Low Tide on Grand Pré*, and was followed the next year by *Songs from Vagabondia*, written in association with Richard Hovey, and *St. Kavin, A Ballad.* Then followed *Michaelmas, a Sea Mark*, and *Behind the Arras* (1895). An artist of rare appreciation, with the great gift of song, he holds and enchants his public still.

Born in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, in 1861, his life has been one dedicated to letters and song. Our Poet Laureate, Edwin Markham, in his valuable *Book of Poetry* (Wise & Co., 1927) says :

> " Although born in Canada, Bliss Carman has spent most of the creative years of his life in the United States, mainly in Boston and New York. His first volume of verse, *Low Tide on Grand Pré* (1893) commanded general and favourable attention. It was followed by *Songs from Vagabondia* (in collaboration with Richard Hovey); *Behind the Arras*, and other distinguished volumes. His collected poems were published in 1905. He has been unofficially acclaimed poet laureate of Canada. Bliss Carman is one of the outstanding poets of the century. In ' The Eavesdropper,' in ' Behind the Arras,' and in other poems with mystical overtones, he rises to the wonder-freighted mood of the immortal Coleridge."

Low Tide at Grand Pré sets the lyric keynote of Carman's well-sustained appreciation of the gifts of nature. The first three stanzas follow.

The sun goes down, and over all
These barren reaches by the tide
Such unelusive glories fall.
I almost dream they yet will bide
Until the coming of the tide.

And yet I know that not for us,
By any ecstasy of dream,
He lingers to keep luminous
A little while the grievous stream,
Which frets, uncomforted of dream.

A grievous stream, that to and fro
Athrough the fields of Acadie
Goes wandering, as if to know
Why one beloved face should be
So long from home and Acadie.

Who can forget the charm of Carman's "Spring Song"? The appreciation of life for the sake of living in this poem is ever refreshing.

Make me over, Mother April.
* * * *
Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more;
Not recalling nor foreseeing,
Let the great slow joys of being
Well my heart through as of yore!
Let me taste the old immortal
Indolence of life once more!

Give me the old drink for rapture,
The delirium to drain,
All my fellows drank in plenty
At the Three Score Inns and Twenty
From the mountains to the main!
Give me the old drink for rapture,
The delirium to drain!

Only make me over, April,
When the sap begins to stir!
Make me man or make me woman,
Make me oaf or ape or human,
Make me anything but neuter
When the sap begins to stir!

The exigencies of space preclude quoting extensively from the beautiful poem entitled " Behind the Arras." The closing stanzas are :

Always the flawless beauty, always the chord
Of the Overword,
Dominant, pleading, sure.
No truth too small to save and make endure.
No good too poor !

And since no mortal can at last disdain
That sweet refrain,
But lets go strife and care,
Borne like a strain of bird notes on the air,
The wind knows where :

Some quiet April evening soft and strange,
When comes the change
No spirit can deplore,
I shall be one with all I was before,
In death once more.

We close with " De Profundis," from *Far Horizons* (Small, Maynard, 1925).

When at the sunset's close,
Earth slowly turns to rest,
I watch the fading rose
Die in the saffron west.

The pale cool stars emerge,
And the blue robe of night
Is sown from verge to verge
With daffodils of light.

And all the distant hills
And shadows seem aware
Of one who holds and thrills
The far away and near.

In a recent review we introduced to our readers Mrs. E. Hall Hains' *Poems of Love and the Unknown.* From her new book, *A Handful of Dreams* (Cecil Palmer) we quote the following beautiful interpretation of " The Musician."

" I'll steep my ears in sounds of rhythmic measure,
And lull my senses in a mist of dreams ;
Nor count as gain the world's most precious treasure
That seeks, in payment, one of Fancy's gleams.

"I'll send my soul adrift upon the wonder
That trembles round the radiance of a star,
And listen to the distant, muffled thunder
Of spinning worlds that roar through space afar.

"My heart shall echo to the plaintive sighing
Of falling leaves that rustle in the breeze,
Or steal the melody from night winds sighing
Their passing sorrow to the listening trees.

"I'd give the world and all its wealth to capture
The vagrant airs with which my fancy teems;
Then all my drifting soul would know the rapture
Of waking vision, in a world of dreams."

Dream-Again is the title-poem of a new book of lyrics, sonnets and quatrains by Isabel Fiske Conant. Mrs. Conant edits a series of books of poetry of especial distinction, brought out by the Mosher Press, Portland, Maine, U.S.A., in their usual format, of pocket-size and hand-made paper, 4/- and 6/-. Among these are *Sky-Rider*, by Wade Oliver, already reviewed here and *And All My Life*, by Ruth Cramer, from which the following quotations are taken:

THE BLIND

I have never seen a star,
I have never seen a tree,
I have never seen a ship at night
Sweep the open sea.

I have never seen the world at dawn,
These things are kept from me,
But I have bathed my soul at dusk
In all eternity.

BLUE GENTIAN

I never see Blue Gentian
Without a glance on high
To find if it be really true—
Or just a patch of sky.

FRAGMENT

Once . . . I heard a young bird's song:
Some young lad's soul whose grievous wrong
Poured its heart out in the sun,
And died again . . . when it had done.

Dream-Again

The terraced town of Rêvencore,
So dear to memory,
Steps down to its white strip of shore,
Its iridescent sea
On stairs worn hollow by tiny hooves,
By children's running feet,
Beneath steep-slanting, red-tiled rooves
Whose eaves with vines are sweet.

Dear, long-remembered Rêvencore,
Brief island in life's main,
I shall not see you evermore,
In earthly sun or rain,
But on the way to Paradise
Time shall restore you then;
I shall delay beneath your skies
Awhile, and dream again.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

Missionary Hymn Contest

Dr. Milton S. Littlefield, president of the Hymn Society, announces the offer of a prize of $100 for the best hymn "written in the spirit and voicing the purpose of the missionary enterprise of to-day," submitted to the Society by February 1st, 1929. When the winning hymn words have been selected a similar prize will be offered for the best musical setting. The judges of the contest are Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, secretary of the International Missionary Council, and secretary of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America; Dr. Henry H. Meyer, editor of the Sunday school publications of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and Dr. Benjamin L. Winchester, head of the Department of Religious Education of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. All manuscripts are to be submitted to Dr. Franklin A. Gaylord, 47 Englewood Avenue, Englewood, New Jersey.

Dr. Littlefield announces that authors may submit more than one manuscript; that each manuscript must be accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name and address of the author, but the name must not appear on the manuscript; that no manuscript will be returned but that none will be used in any way without the consent of the author; and that the Society reserves the right to withhold the award if no manuscript deemed worthy is received. The Hymn Society is a national organization of hymn writers, composers, and hymn book editors. Recently it conducted contests for words and tune for a "Hymn for Airmen," manuscripts numbering more than 1,800 being submitted from every state in the Union and from most countries of Europe and their foreign colonies.

The Oxford Book of Regency Verse (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d.) si ntended to bridge the gap between the Oxford books of Eighteenth Century and Victorian verse, filling in the period between the lyrical ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge and the earlier volumes of Tennyson and Browning; between 1798 and 1837. The bulk of this volume, which runs to nearly 900 pages, shows that it is a very comprehensive collection of the poetry of the period, and the compilers have been able to include many poems that have been omitted from Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and other anthologies which cover the whole range of English poetry. We find ten poems by Thomas Hood, who is so often unjustly under-represented in collections of this kind, and a few lines by George Croly, the famous preacher and divine. There is Joseph Blanco White's one famous contribution to literature, his sonnet "To Night"; and James Grahame, the Scottish lawyer-clergyman, and John Galt are represented by single poems, the latter's authorship of the Canadian Boat Song, by the way, not being regarded by the compiler as definite, although it was settled long ago that he wrote it. There are in the book lines by poets whose names are very little known to us, such as Lloyd, Churchill's friend, and Leyden the brilliant Orientalist—as well as the famous men of this period, Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Wordsworth. It is altogether an interesting volume, introducing us to the best of many minor poets who are "so very minor," and to favourite lines from the major poets, who are "so very major."

In his preface to his book of poems, *Earth, Dear Earth*, (The Bodley Head), Mr. James Mackereth appears to dread that his work may be criticized with impatience and incapacity. Mr. Noyes has fitly said that the first duty of criticism is to seek for the gold, the second that of frankly admitting that there is no gold if diligent search has revealed none, a rule of procedure that THE POETRY REVIEW has always followed There are plenty of nuggets in *Earth, Dear Earth*, even though the book is also encumbered by less valuable ore. The two verses from "Clod," by which I venture to represent this volume, are fully in keeping with the significance of its title, though I acknowledge that "Hymn to Flowers" is the finest poem it contains.

Nature so patient is: she goes
  About her duties with such calm.
Her ages toiled to tint the rose;
  Her æons wrought to reach the palm;
And of her travail who can tell
Ere woodruff was, or pimpernel?

Life is her pollen, time her breeze;
  With cautious pain she mends, she mars
All creatures in her task are bees, . . .
  The tiny insects and the stars,

And men, that 'twixt her clouds and clay
Flaunt in her gleam and flit away.

Out of its very qualifications for good poetry are born the imperfections of *Stars in the Mist* by D. M. Ross (Selwyn and Blount, 6s.). The robustness of outlook and virility of diction seem to have led to a regrettable coarseness of theme in many instances. Even in these days, when frank admission has fortunately taken the place of suggestive innuendo, there are some things unnecessary to dwell upon. Yet in a poem like " The Dancer," from which I take two verses, the lines are worthy of unmitigated praise.

The dawn and darkness, all swift things
That touch the senses and depart;
The sound of high home-going wings
From Cupid launching his last dart. . . .
The joy of morning when it springs
From out the wave, are in her heart.

She has the lyric flesh indeed
That clings and clasps her like a vine,
And moves with undulating speed
And flows and falls in loop and line,
Such as the ancient Greeks decreed
To live in marble made divine.

A robust vigour informs *The Vortex* (Victor Gollancz) in an even more marked degree and is entirely without the detracting factor. Mr. Redwood Anderson has been able to invest his impressions of modern industrialism with a glamour and purpose that are most inspiring. After contemplating dynamos he writes:

So earth and air and water and flame
Man's ancient conquered enemies—are sent
To conquer in their turn, and tame
This fierce and last and mightiest element.
So the old centaurs of the storm are caught,
Bridled and bitted by a human thought,
Put to the treadmill of a human need:
To feed
The hunger of mastery
By which alone man keeps alive;
To hang with light
His streeted citadels of might,
And drive
His million wheels of industry.

And to prove his responsiveness to human beauty he can write, in A Lady ":

But it took Greece to make her! All the slain
Of Marathon and sad Thermopylæ;
It took the brain
Of Plato to conceive her—and to give
Shape to the flawless marble that is she,
Praxiteles; and to make live
Movement of sense and being in the stone,
The passion of Pygmalion.

. . . . . .

No flower that grows
In any garden-close,
In any garden where delight
Walks from the happy dawn to happy night—
No flower can be
So fine, so rare, so delicate as she.

But it took all the agony
Of brute and blind humanity
So to perfect her—all the power
Since ever the world began,
Of the dead heart, and the dead brain,
And the dead hand of man!
She is a flower, so beautiful a flower,
Grown on the dung-heap of all human pain.

April, by S. L. Bensusan (St. Catherine Press, 4s. net) is a book with a definitely lyrical note. By calling his volume "a book of minor verse" the author modestly claims for himself less than many a poet with fewer assets is in haste to assume, for Mr. Bensusan's technique is neither slovenly nor eccentric, but skilful and with a due music. His poems treat mainly of love and of nature; the four seasons colour them, and the emotion of memory gives them warmth. The whole book has a level of equal work that makes any choice for commendation difficult to make, but I would single out as especially felicitous "Haud Immemor," "April Evening" and "Watch Night." There are some sonnets among the lyrics, and one of these, "To One Who Passed," seems to me to have a peculiar fragrance all its own.

Nightingale, fled with summer o'er the seas
To reach far forest depths on weary wing,
There, while our days are dark, in sunlit ease
You wait the sharp, imperious call of Spring,
But ere you left our shores, we held your song
A captive in some English woodland way,
And still it echoes those green aisles along
Where, 'neath the leaves, fair April dreams with May.

Wanderer, passed so far beyond recall,
For whom the gates of Love were flung apart,
Lest you should bruise your breast against the bars—
Amid all changes that this life befall
You in the dim, still woodland of my heart
Sing softly to the clouds that screen the stars.

Mr. Bensusan has written more prose than verse, but it is evident that the constant use of the prose medium has not dulled his sensitiveness to finer harmonies, and this little book of verse—which achieves more in its unpretentiousness than many a volume of lyrics of less flavour and feeling but more trumpeting of claim—adds a very real note of authentic beauty to the acknowledged skill and sincerity of his wider output. Captain Cranmer Byng contributes a delightful preface.

A Poetry Book from Spenser to Bridges, compiled by A. Watson Bain (Cambridge University Press, 5s.), is more than merely the third part of a series of poetry books for boys and girls which the Cambridge University Press have published from time to time. It is a representative anthology of the main stream of English poetry, beginning with extracts from the "Faery Queen," which are perhaps the most musical pieces of English ever written, and concluding with a considerable bulk of modern work which will make the collection particularly interesting to inquisitive youthful readers, for whom it is primarily intended, the main aim of the book being, as that of the two preceding ones: "to give emotional and intellectual pleasure and to stimulate in its readers a real love of poetry." Mr. Bain is to be specially commended for his omissions in the latter part of the volume.

Ballads and Poems (Blackwood, 7s. 6d.) is a new collection of the verses of Alfred Noyes, arranged independently of the previous volumes he has published. Mr. Noyes is shown to great advantage in this excellent volume, not only as a master of his craft, but also a poet of real distinction and rare beauty and music. Here we have again the exquisite "Raleigh" from the Mermaid Tavern Tales and many other finely conceived and beautifully wrought long poems of character.

A reading of *A Rime of the Rood and Other Poems* (Longmans) convinced us that our friend, Clement Wood, was right when he said that Father Charles O'Donnell's aim and achievement in poetry is "to bring heaven near, to hold earth high." He writes, or rather sings, in perfect taste of sacred things and is one of the small band of modern poets who delicately and entrancingly find the essence of supreme song in Christ's life on earth, as in "Sentry":

The wolf is at the door
Of a house in Galilee,
The prowler that men know
And fear as Poverty.

And oftentimes the Child
  Crept from His cosy bed
To steal out in the cold
  And stroke its hungry head.

" Be you to these," He spoke,
  " A guard by night and day,
By My belovèd prized
  For what you keep away."

Padraic Colum is continuing in America the work begun in Ireland, and continuing too in his latest volume, *Creatures* (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.), his jewelled description of animal and bird life and characteristics. His subjects are crows, otters, asses, pigeons, monkeys, macaws, bisons, vultures, hornets, condors, plovers, and his art (aided by luxuriant drawings by Boris Artzybasheff) is succinctly demonstrated in one of his shortest pieces, " Bird of Paradise " :

With sapphire for her crown,
And with the Libyan wine
For lustre of her eyes ;
With azure for her feet
(It is her henna stain) ;
Then iris for her vest,
Rose, ebony, and flame,
She lives a life enthralled,
In forests that are old,
As old as the Moon.

Several visitors to the Poetry Society's library, where the latest publications in poetry may be seen but not bought, have given orders for the most exquisite anthology of this season, *The Madonna* (Longmans, 18s. net), selected and edited most admirably and reverently by Sir James Marchant with an authoritative introduction on the Madonna in art by Sir Charles Holmes, director of the National Gallery, from whence a number of the sixty-five appropriate illustrations have been drawn.

All who take an active interest in the drama, will know Mr. Allardyce Nicoll's great book on *British Drama*. He has now followed this up with *Readings from British Drama* (Harrap, 10s. 6d.), a book that is both companion to its predecessor and a volume that will give great pleasure to any who care to read plays. It gives an excellent sketch of the progress of drama from medieval to modern times, including extracts from many plays which are never performed and have never been reprinted. Mr. Nicoll's aim has been to select passages that are typical rather than beautiful, and the result is an enthralling book that should be in everybody's library.

Mr. Kenneth Grahame's *Golden Age*, though it is not verse, is poetry of a delicate quality, and a new edition from The Bodley Head (7s. 6d.) embellished with more than usually fitting illustrations by Ernest H. Shephard, who has translated the spirit of *The Golden Age* admirably, must be recommended to all lovers of fine literature finely presented.

Mr. Humbert Wolfe has contributed a thoughtful preface to *Swinburne, Selected Poems* (Bodley Head, 21s.). He explains that the illustrator, Mr. Harry Clarke, has presented an interpretation of Swinburne entirely opposed to his own, and this perhaps makes the book more interesting. Mr. Clarke's drawings are not only unusual, they are remarkable, and arguable.

Sussex always seems to inspire in poets lilting metres and rhythms that breathe the wind that sweeps over the downs, and must have been the subject of far more poems than any other county in England. Miss Vera Arlett is another who has come under the spell of the Weald, and the Sussex section of her *Poems* (Elkin Matthews, 3s. 6d.) shows that she can add to a charming rhythmic faculty a romantic expression of feeling. This book, which includes poems reprinted from THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-Day*, won the medal offered in 1926 by the Panton Arts Club for the best volume of unpublished verse, which was awarded by Mr. John Drinkwater.

This theory is in some way proved by the timely appearance of *Another Book of Sussex Verse* (Combridge, Hove, 5s.). Every corner of Sussex seems to have achieved mention by one or other of the sixty-six contributors ; " from Beachey to Selsey Bill, " from Duncton Town to Tarbery Hill," " from Pulboro' to Storrington."

There is so much geography in this book that we are inclined to suspect that one of the charms of writing about Sussex is the abundance of delightful place names which may be used, and which help the rhythm trippingly along. Amongst the contributors to this anthology we find many " Poetry Reviewers," including Beryl Carter, Ruth Wainewright, Vera Arlett, Joyce Malden, Maud Slessor, C. R. Haines, Charles Mortimer, H. M. Walbrook, and the late W. D. Scott-Moncrieff.

Amongst the many publications that have appeared this year in honour of Schubert, there is one that stands out particularly from the rest as being the only offering in verse. This is *Franz Schubert, a Sequence of Sonnets and a Prose Anthology*, by Eva Mary Grew (" British Musician," Birmingham, 5s.). Though the Sonnets may not be of the first quality, they are the work of an enthusiastic lover of the composer, and the prose collection undoubtedly lives up to its claim of being " an anthology of some of the most helpful and discriminating pronouncements concerning Schubert that have been made during the last hundred years." In Sonnet VIII is a sincere tribute :

" Thy music, Schubert, through a valley winds
Like a deep river, smooth and slow and strong,
Murmuring composedly a ceaseless song ;
Wed to resplendent words, it closer binds
To simple hearts the truths a poet finds
In deep woods hidden ; and how oft, among
The silences that unto peace belong,
It carries solace to noise-shattered minds ! "

* * *

We regret to hear of the death in New York on December 17th at the age of forty-two, of Elinor Wylie (Mrs. William Rose Benet), whose latest book of poems was noticed in the last issue of THE POETRY REVIEW (p. 424). The *Morning Post* recognises that " as a poet, Miss Wylie, whose earliest inspiration seems to have been Blake, published work of rare distinction. In an era of slovenly thought and muddled speech her firm, decisive line and clear form were welcomed by all lovers of true poetry. She loved bare hills, crystal cups, frost-bitten fields, landscapes ' drawn in pearly monotones,' and could sincerely declare at the opening of a sonnet wrought in clean, ringing metal,

Down to the Puritan marrow of my bones,
There's something in this richness that I hate.

Indeed, even her ecstatics are white-cold rather than white-hot ; her figures scintillate like stars in a mid-winter midnight. She had the love of the democratic medley of the teeming life of the Babbitt-warren, her philosophy of living being expressed in *The Eagle and the Mole*. Her verse often recalls that of Emily Dickinson, and there can be no doubt that her hatred of ' easy options,' either in art or the art of living made her one of the salutary influences in modern American poetry."

* * *

The Rev. F. de W. Lushington, M.A., Hon. C.F., for some time Headmaster of Elstree School and Dover College, and an Eton Master, who has been the representative of and examiner in verse-speaking for The Poetry Society on the Continent of Europe, has accepted the living of King's Langley, and will be available for special school lectures and verse-speaking examinations in England. Mr. Lushington has recently published through Wells, Gardner & Co. the notes of his lectures in the United States on " Christ's Way and Modern Problems," which constitute a call to youth and an elucidation of many apparent difficulties in a sympathetic spirit, illumined by the apposite use of modern poetry which can still be drawn on for inspiration, consolation and guidance.

A supplementary examination for the Gold Medal for Verse-Speaking and the annual competition for the Lady Margaret Gold Medal will be held at an early date.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AT HEIDELBERG

Only three representatives of the Poetry Society were able to accept the invitation last August of the inaugurators of the Heidelberg Festspiele to be present at this interesting drama festival. The idea of such a festival in such a setting was indeed an inspiration, and it was a surprise that few visitors from other countries were among the audiences, which consisted almost entirely of German people.

To journey in bright weather down the Rhine to Heidelberg was a fitting preparation for the beauty of the Festspiele. And at first sight of the shapely bridge of red sandstone and the ruins of the castle towering above the fantastic roofs and spires of Heidelberg every newcomer was bewitched.

The air was full of excitement. From the ends of Germany people had come to see the Festspiele. Troops of the Wandervogel or League of Youth travelled on foot bareheaded, the girls in simple flowered dresses, the boys often wearing linen coats of gentian blue with buff suède knickerbockers. On the top of many a heavy knapsack was slung a lute or guitar. Occasionally a band of students passed, six or seven abreast, singing spirited part-songs to the soft music of plucked strings.

At dusk the road up to the castle resounded with the noise of footsteps and the throbbing of motors. The lights of Heidelberg flashed below and there were glimpses of the Neckar curving far away into the plain of the Rhine. The sense of expectation grew stronger that something wonderful was about to happen.

If Shakespeare could have seen the performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the courtyard of Heidelberg castle he would have surely been amazed. Scarcely a suggestion was there in production or music of Elizabethan England. Yet almost any manifestation of the master idea sets some of the magic of the Dream a'working, and under the stars on a summer night, with the renaissance façade of the castle as a background to the natural trees and bushes of the stage the scene might well have been a wood near the Athens of Shakespeare's imagination.

Much of the production was disappointing. But there were moments amid the passages of dim interpretation that were crystallised into precious memories as when in a ray of moonlight the first fairy danced on to the stage in an ecstasy of lovely motion. As Oberon and Titania entered with their train one was suddenly aware of bright eyes and the half visible shapes of fairies in every tree and bush. Wearing a snow-white eighteenth-century wig, a tiny milk-white bodice and a skirt flounced with clear sunset colours the fairy queen danced in a radiance through which moths blindly fluttered, becoming large and brilliant until they dropped into the outer darkness. The persistent little notes of grasshoppers suggested that a fairy orchestra was playing melodies scarcely perceptible to human ears but a burst of twentieth-century music peremptorily drowned such fancies.

There was something strange and unearthly about Oberon. The brightness of his silver hair, his glittering eyes, and the almost uncanny intelligence of his face increased one's belief that here was no creature of flesh and blood. Mysteriously he would vanish, his dark green and silver dress suddenly merging with the background. Then by magic he would reappear, stately and serene, speaking his words with a diction of unforgettable beauty, and at such times it mattered little that Shakespeare's words were being spoken in another language, As for Puck (the Germans call him Pook), he danced about the stage on feet so light and swift that to " put a girdle round the world in forty minutes " seemed a probable feat. In this bewitched place Puck was as much the person one might expect to meet as in an English wood on Midsummer Night.

In a beautiful production of this play at the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich a strong contrast was made between the mortals and the fairy folk to intensify the magic of the Dream. In Heidelberg this was carried too far. Even when the broadness of Elizabethan humour is remembered one doubts if Bottom, who was as vulgar as a French circus clown, was ever what Shakespeare meant him to be. Who knows but that in this clod of earth the poet may have seen a quickening of imagination, a glimpse of divinity? Mr. Galloway Kyle has pointed out that in an early edition of the play Bottom is made to say of the ballad of his wonderful dream, " peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it *after* death."

Although Theseus and his court never allowed the audience to forget that they were famous actors and actresses, Quince and Snug and their companions fitted better into the picture. No more English rustics than Red Indians, they were yet familiar friends to every member of the audience. Were they not woodcutters straight out of Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, whose intercourse with fairy people was exactly as things should be?

The heights reached in the early scenes were never again attained. This lovely dream grew steadily into a pantomime, inevitably, as if a fat theatrical manager had arrived behind the scene, shouting at the producer: " What do you mean by all this moonshine when I told you to give the public what it wants? " Imperceptibly the fairies of Titania's train changed into fourth-rate chorus girls, and disillusionment was complete when Bottom reeled on to the stage to make his bow, arm in arm with Peas-blossom and Cobweb, followed by Quince and his friends, each arming a shabby fairy. A cold breeze rushed across the stage, and the limelight disappeared as if the broken spell had deprived it of the power of shining.

Space will not permit us to dwell upon the performances of Hauptmann's comedy *Schluck und Jau*, or the picturesque *Das Kätchen von Heilbronn*, by Kleist, a romance of the age of chivalry, with many hackneyed situations, which appeals to the German imagination of to-day as strongly as did its prototype *Patient Griselda* to mediaeval

Europe. The pageantry of this play, with the background of the old castle, recreated the past so that many of the events seemed to be actually happening. But in spite of the popularity of *Kätchen*, it was significant to read in the *Börsen-Zeitung* of Berlin that " Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* has been the fundamental chord of the Heidelberg Drama Festival." [1]

PHYLLIS M. PRESTON.

* * *

Presumably, the natural definition of a " Dramatic Reading " is the reading of a play. To us, however, there is a different form of the same title which, although it also implies the reading of a play, conveys with it a different medium of expression. Surely a " Dramatic Reading " is something different from a " Reading." Any reading of any play must from its very form be described as " Dramatic," but it implies to me that there will be some assistance by way of dressing or lighting or scenery, while a " reading " pure and simple is devoid of these concrete aids to expression.

These remarks are only applicable to plays of a poetic nature, for prose plays depend entirely on the meaning of their lines, not on their rhythmic or poetic effect, and to them the help of the appurtenances of the stage are not of such great importance. The meaning of a poetic drama, however, good though it may be, is made easier to appreciate by the effects of colour and light, and it is for this reason that this artificial style of acting may be upheld. For we have had an example of both schools of reading in the last few days. The first, a " Dramatic Reading " in our sense of the phrase, was given at 11 Lennox Gardens, S.W., on November 27th, when Medallists of the Poetry Society read *As Hand With Hand* by B. L. Bowhay. This production was carried out as far as possible as if the performers had no books in their hands, but they were obviously hampered by being unable to look up, and their actions were stiff and uncomfortable. It is difficult to know to what extent a production of this type should be in keeping with the conventions of the stage; as all the players discovered, it is very hard to do anything really convincing with a book in hand, let alone to stab and be stabbed, these episodes being by far the weakest part in an otherwise colourful and successful performance. It is naturally very difficult to give a genuine representation of any character if the part is not sufficiently well known to allow the actor to dispense with the book.

The other reading was held on December 7th, at the Royalty Theatre, under the auspices of the British Empire Shakespeare Society. The play selected was *Much Ado About Nothing*, and before saying anything about the theoretical side of the production, high tribute must be paid

[1] Readers who wish to participate in similar special meetings abroad (at which various courtesies and facilities are offered to members of the Poetry Society), including an Easter meeting in Rome, are requested to notify the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

to Mr. Norman V. Norman, and Miss Beatrice Wilson, for their delightful interpretations of Benedick and Beatrice, for their excellent understanding with each other, and for their successful direction of the other members of the cast, who all made us realise that Shakespeare is so great that a reading with all the members of the cast in ordinary dress, sitting in a scene utterly incongruous with the play (the bar parlour of "The Bird in Hand") "goes down" without palling. We know what to expect when we go to hear Shakespeare, and we take it for granted that it *is* poetry (in fact it is such poetry that we do not realise that it is one of the most unpopular forms for drama to-day), and there is no doubt that it needs no artificial aids to bring out its qualities—not so much perhaps because they are so obvious, but because it has become a tradition to us to *know* that they are there.

£50 ($250) Prize for Best Poems about Cathedrals

To secure a symposium of poetic expressions regarding the world's great shrines, $250 has been provided by Mrs. Percy Hamilton Stewart, of New York and Southampton, for the best poems about cathedral churches.

This Cathedral Poetry Contest is the fifteenth international poetry competition held under the auspices of The Poetry Review. The poets may select their favoured cathedral of any country or time, dealing with it as they may be inspired. There is no restriction as to the aspects that may be touched, such as the history, traditions, legends, spiritual influence, art and architecture, which make up the pageantry of civilisation.

Manuscripts should be typed, the name and address of the author written in the upper left corner, and should be addressed to Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, 299 Park Avenue, New York, U.S.A., marked "Cathedral Contest," to reach her by March 15th. More than one poem may be submitted by the same author. No manuscript will be returned, but rejected poems will remain the property of the authors, who may publish them elsewhere after the awards have been announced in The Poetry Review. The Editor, who will act as adjudicator, acting on the recommendations of the Poetry Premiums Committee, reserves the right to divide the premium in four or more equal or unequal amounts and to publish in due course any of the prize winning or commended or reserved poems.

* * *

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the Poetry Society was entertained by the president, Mrs. Marie Tello Phillips, on the occasion of a prize contest in which poems by the members were read anonymously and the winners selected by the guest of honour, Dr. Curtis Hidden Page, of Boston, poet and literary critic, who awarded first prize to "No Thoroughfare," by Mrs. Galen C. Hartman; second, to "Poetry," by Marie Tello Phillips, and third to Mrs. May T. Neff.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The contest for a poem " packed with thought," the sixteenth of the international poetry contests held under the auspices of the American Section of The Poetry Society of Great Britain resulted in a tie for the $100 offered by Charles Alva Lane, of Alliance, Ohio, an equal number of votes falling to the poems entitled " To Omar Khayyám," by Mary Alethea Woodward, of Portland, Ore., and " Mortality," by Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff, of Mount Kisco, N.Y.

The second choice is " Homo Sapiens," by James A. Tyng, of N.Y. ; the third, " But Plato," by Joseph Auslander of New York ; the fourth, " Thoughts," by Petronella O'Donnell, Burnham-on-the-Sea, England.

The following, out of upward of six hundred entries, receive honourable mention : " Birth, Rise and Future of a World," by Hugh Sarama, N.Y. ; " The Alchemist," by Julia P. Dabney, Brookline, Mass. ; " The Ideal Future," by Henry A. Reed, Clarence, N.Y. ; " Defeat," by E. S. Shepard, Washington, D.C. ; " Prayer for the Unitive Life," by Evelyn M. Watson, Buffalo, N.Y. ; " On Growing Old," by Marguerite Dixon Clark, Flushing, N.Y. ; " The Image," by Hortense Flexner, Bryn Mawr ; " The Mystery of the Hereafter," by Alethea Todd Alderson ; " The Everlasting Minute," by Louis Ginsberg, N.Y. ; " A Few Questions," by Walter K. Lewis, Ramsgate ; " The Unheralded," by Mrs. Curtis May, Saskatoon, Canada ; " Jamaica—Isle of Springs," by V. S. McHuan, Christobal, Panama Canal Zone ; " Como," by Madame Helena Derezinska, Consulat of Poland, Milan, Italy ; " Great Pan is Dead," by C. K. M. Carroll, Glasgow ; " Now Barabbas . . ." by J. Marjory Nash, Market Harborough, Leicester. The Judges in this contest were : Mrs. William A. Bartlett, Mrs. Nicholas Murray Butler, Mrs. James Lee Laidlaw, John Jay Chapman, Professor Wm. Lyon Phelps, and Dr. Henry Woodhouse.

More approval of the proposed New Poetry Assessment Board has been received since our last report, together with a clearer appreciation of its scope, which is not confined to the MSS. received for consideration in this section of THE POETRY REVIEW. In the last days of the old year we have not leisure or space to deal further with the matter but we hope readers will supply more opinions and suggestions for discussion later. We want to extend the personal interest and appeal of this long-established and unique feature of the REVIEW, and to consolidate our Fellowship which has become world-wide, and therefore invite our colleagues to join more freely in round table conferences. Newcomers are reminded of what was written in the last issue about the remarkable continuity and steadfastness of this premium feature, and of what has been repeated from the days of

Stephen Phillips about the impartiality of our welcome to verse-writers who have something to say and ability to express themselves. The song may come from any bush, it is the work and not the name attached to it that receives consideration.

We have other awards in addition to this general one to deal with this month, and in consequence have to be sparing in our comments on current work. We have sifted a larger collection of MSS. than usual, but have less outstanding work. Many of the subjective poems are artificial—the emotions and aspirations expressed therein seem to be imagined rather than real, to be literary rather than individual and sincere, and the descriptive work is less sustained. Hence, in spite of what a recent contributor wrote of her work, we cannot find among the more mature writers a more picturesque and individual piece than Elizabeth Binnington's "A Meadow and a Poplar Tree," which we place first, with A. Doris L. Wilson and G. E. Merrick second with "Naomi to Ruth" and "The Flat Lands" respectively—both concrete, original and sustained.

The commended list is a lengthy one, and includes Vera I. Arlett, Worthing; N. K. Cruickshank, Bury; M. K. M. Brown, Southampton; F. M. Barnett, Tilehurst; H. Connell, London, S.W.; E. A. Cullabine, Worksop; Silvia Dobson, Tulse Hill, S.W.; E. M. Hopkins, Kew; G. Fauvel, Enfield; R. Gresham, Glasgow; M. R. Dowson, Watford; A. Hounam, Erdington; Beatrice Eve, Weybridge; H. Derezinska, Milan; A. Sculpholme, Sheffield; Blanche Jones, Broadstairs; Dolly Scouloudi, London, W.; Dulcie Greville, Silcoates; "Simone," Kensington, W.; Irene Oldershaw, Leicester; P. O'Donnell, Burnham; John Cannings, Melksham; E. F. Alden, Haddenham; W. K. Lewis, Ramsgate; Marie Tello Phillips, Pittsburgh; Isabel Fiske Conant, New York; H. Atherton Nichols, New York; Iërne Ormsby, Addiscombe; Audrey A. M. Bell, Broadstairs; Elizabeth Wild, Berkeley, Calif.; Mary Hale Cooper, Columbus, O.; E. M. Walker, Bournemouth; A. J. G. Russell, London, S.W.; L. F. Collingburn, Gt. Missenden; F. E. Oldfield, London, N.; Ernest Alcock, Hounslow; Nancy Pollok, Glasgow; H. E. Holland, London, N.W.; M. Forbes Myers, Bournemouth; Zuella Sterling, Calif.; John Willwyn, Gobowen; Margaret Napier, Shaftesbury; Mabel Toovey, Amersham; Esther Samms, Luton; John Purdie, Paisley; Margaret E. Rose, Derby.

We have been taken to task severely by one contributor and warmly commended by another for publishing "The Rosy Cross"—a very fine and typical example of a particular tendency in modern poetry. This reminds us that the literary critic of the *Peterborough Advertiser* ("A.G.B.") took special notice of another premium poem published in our last issue, pointing out that "the initial and outstanding contribution is a fine poem by A. W. Uloth, of King's Lynn. Its title is 'The Roundhead,' and both critics and lovers of modern verse will delight in the perfection both of form and atmo-

sphere, with which the author treats his theme. It is arguable that none but an East Anglian could so treat it. The Fen and the Cromwell country—possibly the people, too, in remoter parts, still retain something of the dourness and resoluteness which characterized the Ironsides, and Mr. Uloth has the impress of the present as well as the inspiration of that part. His verse measure is eminently fitting to the theme and he limns the Roundhead—depicts his spirit, too, with admirable skill. Pietist-soldier, soldier-pietist—it is difficult to say which—the Roundhead was, but here is fully shown a man."

Mrs. Osborne, of Silcoates, Wakefield, writes :—" I would like to say that I feel that the New Poetry Assessment Board will do a great service to all lovers and writers of poetry in sifting and classifying the large output of modern verse. It is easy to understand that this is too large and strenuous a task to be dealt with solely by the adjudicators of THE POETRY REVIEW, excellent as they are. At present it seems to me very difficult to distinguish the tendencies of modern poetry, both in spirit and in form. One gets bewildered by the variety and quantity that is presented haphazard. Classification should also make it easier for each one to recognize those among the modern poets who make a particular appeal to him, and from whose works, therefore, he will obtain the greatest benefit and pleasure.

" Surely the use of the half-rhyme is not, as Mr. John Purdie suggests, an innovation of the modern poets, but a legitimate feature of English Poetry. In reading Shelley's *Adonais* lately, I noticed that in two of the most beautiful verses he rhymed Sawn—gone, and mourn —burn. There must be, of course, many similar examples."

" MYSELF "

Our contributors have not been entirely happy with a subject that is alleged to absorb modern poets. We have had fewer instead of more MSS than usual. The hold of the subjective and personal is weakening, apparently ; the insistent " I " is less obtrusive, and the universal is asserting itself. Few of the many excellent and finely expressive poems on " Myself " are trivial or self-centred ; in emotional content they are general in application. Happily, too, the general expression is bright, optimistic, courageous, neither trivial nor morose, nor self-pitying, with never an echo of Matthew Arnold's complaint,

> " Weary of myself, and sick of asking
> What I am and what I ought to be "

which we expected would provide the text or theme of many of the poems in this fascinating competition. In no morbid or despondent vein these poets ask " When shall I solve the riddle of my soul," or anticipate the day when " Poise gained, I shall cease to identify." Impressed by the beauty and mystery of life, each one " has almost forgotten the thing called 'Myself,' "... or rejoices that "The captive me

escapes in poesy," confirming the attitude of many poets outside the neo-Georgians who find in poetry a refuge from self. In consequence we find little self-revelation in these poems on "Myself." When "a sometime secret aim" is disclosed it is only to close up again with the excuse "I am a woman: change is woman's way," or to admit that "when I strove to understand myself I could not," for "A woman cannot tell" and "The stranger who is me" is an elusive individual even to the less complex class of contributor who "thanks God he fashioned me simple, but fiery and wild, With the heart of a woman and the soul of a child"; while we recognize no boastful spirit in the claim of another characteristic contributor "That all of heaven waits in ourselves concealed."

We have hesitated over the awards before deciding to divide the premium between four contributors who appear to be most distinctively original and representative of different methods of approaching and handling the subject:—

Joyce Sambrook, London, W.C.; Vera Arlett, Worthing; Ethel Holdsworth, York; and Florence Bone, Ripon.

The adjudicators particularly admired the ideal portrait of Dr. Bertha Skeat (Sedbergh) and the descriptive and imaginative power of Zuella Sterling (California), who asks "What is the treasure I take to Eden? What must I carry through dim to-morrows," and answers, "Only 'Myself,'—a book of memory."

On the "honours" list we place E. F. Alden, Haddenham; Audrey Bell, Broadstairs; M. K. M. Brown, Southampton; Helena Derezinska, Milan; Gwendolin Goodwin, Sheffield; F. Kemp, Catford; Blanche Lee, Oneida; Dulcie Greville, Silcoates; John Purdie, Paisley; "Simone," Kensington; and we specially mention: J. W. Anderson, Skegness; Mae Baker-Henline, Bradford, Pa.; Mary H. Cooper, Columbus, O.; Hy. L. Dixon, Warminster; Amy G. Eddison, S.W.1.; Nancy J. French, Bradford, Pa.; Mabel A. Hanson, Sioux Falls; Blanche T. Hartman, Pittsburgh; Aline Heward, S.W.11; Blanche Jones, Broadstairs; M. Newton, Purley; Edith Reynolds, N.W.8; May Rowland, Eastbourne; Mary Robinson, Eccles; "Sagitta"; Victoria Slade; M. T. Smieton, S.W.20; M. K. Toovey; Elizabeth Wild, Berkeley, Calif.; Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth: and Mary A. Woodward, Portland, Or. In future we will disqualify competitors who neglect to give both name and address on their MSS.

FLIGHT

The winners of the contest for poems on Flight for the prizes offered by Mrs. Charles D. Dickey, vice-president of The Poetry Society, are announced by Mrs. William A. Bartlett, chairman of the Premiums Committee of the Society, and American Editor of the POETRY REVIEW.

The first prize of $50.00 is awarded to Lieut. J. L. Hitchings, Air

Corps, stationed at Fort Crockett, Galveston, Texas, for his ballad, "The Ghost of the Eighth Attack."

Harold Vinal, editor of *Voices*, of New York, wins the second prize ($25) with a sonnet. Mrs. W. L. Kenly, of Washington, D.C., takes the third prize ($15.00) with a poem entitled "Unsung"; and N. B. Turner of Boston, Mass., wins the fourth prize ($10) with a poem, "Byrd, Explorer."

The following out of upward of eight hundred entries receive special mention:—

"The Flight," by Dorothy Q. Gaddess, Greenwich, Conn.;
"Wings," (dedicated to Floyd Bennett and the Bremen Flyers), by Helen Trafford Moore, Ashville, North Carolina;
"To An Aviator," by E. Joyce Harrison, Lincoln;
"Flight," by Edith De Blois Laskey, Swampscott, Mass.;
"Birdmen," by Maud R. Liston, Adelaide, South Australia;
"Astride the Modern Pegasus," by Will T. Gentz, Hollywood, California;
"The Night Mail," by Naomi C. Katz;
"The Crossing," by Robert Sachs, Woodmere, N.Y.
"Icarus—The Eternal," by C. K. M. Carroll, Glasgow.

THE GHOSTS OF THE EIGHTH ATTACK

When first the roar of a DH-4
Came sounding over the plain,
The clan who flew were tried and true,
And stout of heart and brain.
Our Squadron then lost gallant men,
And well we have learned their lack;
And we'll drink a toast to each brave Ghost,—
The Ghosts of the Eighth Attack.

Kingsland turned to a spin and burned,
Rex and Gallagher died
In battle flame on the field of fame,
With Mitchell by their side.
From Death unveiled they never quailed,
Or broke upon the rack,
But well we ken they fought like men,
The Ghosts of the Eighth Attack!

Dean and Bateman and Hollingsworth
Death garnered, thigh and thew,
And Captain Shea, with his Irish way,—
Virgin and Hartman too.
Robinson, Martin, Grodecki,
And Mackey, and Womack:
Brave hearts of gold that now lie cold,—
The Ghosts of the Eighth Attack!

And I sometimes think, when the night winds howl,
And never a ship is out,
That I hear the roar of a DH-4,
And the wail of wires in doubt;
And I think I see in a spectre ship
Spirits that *must* come back;
And I hail them then, who have died like *men*,—
The Ghosts of the Eighth Attack!

J. L. Hitchings.

FLIGHT

They are immortal, voyagers like these,
Bound for supreme and royal latitudes;
They soar beyond the eagle, where it broods,
With Venus and the evening Pleiades;
Far, in the blue pale Indies of the sky,
They plough, gold-prowed, the Arteries of Air,
Finding an unexplored dimension there—
They leave us Star Maps we may voyage by.

Not Galileo, with his dreaming power,
Nor great Columbus, master of the gale,
Chartered for Time, such harbours for man's flight.
Lured by another Odyssey, a Grail,
They climbed the heavens, Byrd in his white hour,
Lindberg, an eagle sweeping through the night.

Harold Vinal.

UNSUNG

I watch him pass through the far-off sky,
Where, brittle and drained of light
The shell of an old moon hangs—and high
I catch the flash of his turning there,
A white spark winging along the air,
Then lost to sight.

Yet think you he travels the sky's blue road
Alone? From the world apart?
Up, out of the flying field, till glowed
That last high sparkle against the moon
There rides with him—be it night or noon—
Some woman's heart!

And what achievement can man e'er write
In terms of those far-flung miles
Through lonely space, that can prove more might

Of faith and daring, than is her part
Who, watching him bearing away her heart,
Yet waves—and smiles!

So honour the flashing ship that roars
Through the tenuous blue of day;
That hurls its shadow against the stars,
Or battles with death where the black sleet drives;
But honour as well the mothers and wives
Who wait and pray!

JULIE CLOSSON KENLY.

BYRD, EXPLORER

Born in a land of honey and light,
Bred with the hearth flame in his face,
Why did he dream in a tranquil night
A dream of outer space?

What should a lad's gay fancy know
Of the wrath of winds when the storm rides free,
Of the bitter light on an Arctic floe,
Or the surge of a midnight sea?

He cannot tell. But the dream is old
As his very heart;—from the deep of things
Sudden a flaw of alien cold,
Sudden, a lift of wings. . . .

Something nameless and splendid—worth
The joy of youth and the peace of home:
A far hail, *Come to the end of the earth!*—
An answering cry, *I come!*

N. B. TURNER.

TO AN AVIATOR

Through the unchartered playground of the sky,
Where the four winds like laughing children run
And stars go singing, you have dared to ply
Your lonely craft, have kept tryst with the sun.
And plashed your wings adown those sapphire pools
Where merry tasks, suspended by a song,
Dance all the day, or a lost angel cools
His burning feet the limpid waves among;
There a white cloud of pinions brushed your face:
You have been partner with the age-old moon,
Have kept abreast of her in that swift race
When crowding stars, her sole spectators swoon.
And through the streets on tired feet we plod,
We earthbound mortals, envying you, a god.

E. JOYCE HARRISON.

THOUGHTS

AM I a pawn on the great board of Fate
A puppet in the dream of some strange mind,
A soul that searches for its soul-born mate,
A phantom made by circumstance unkind?
Have I no will power, do I really seem
To have no part, no future, no world place,
A creature maybe in a lurid dream,
No chances in the run of life's long race?
Must I obey without escape at hand
Orders unknown for here and there to go,
Have I no substance in a solid land,
Have I no choices in a world of woe?
How came I here, where was my spirit bred?
Not in this planet! Have I lived before
And was it such a sinful life I led,
That brought me back to this sad world's lone shore?
Another chance! And should this strange dream end,
The sleeper wake, and I should cease to be
As a burst bubble which no hand can mend,
A vapour floating on an endless sea!

Or is the old Book right that tells the tale
Of a sweet garden and a loving pair
And of a test in which the lovers fail
And woe and sorrow fill the sun-fed air.
And of their children doomed to endless woe,
All nature groaning in this awful fall
A crafty devil-serpent their great foe
Seeking the ruin of them one and all.
And of a God of Love Who heard their cry
And gave Himself as ransom on the tree
Leaving for earth His glorious throne on high
To rescue sinners, such as you and me?
Right is the Book! And from this fallen race
This mass of evil, filth and foul decay
Those who look up to see the Saviour's face
Grow a sweet flower of beauty to the Day
Grow something wondrous sweet and wondrous fair
A glorious being emerges from this pain,
As after blast of sultry lurid air
A flower unfolds in gently falling rain.

PETRONELLA O'DONNELL.

WHAT IS POETRY?

As in the case of everything else worth while, human intellect has been trying to express its conception of what poetry is or should be ever since Homer, Aristotle, and the Wise Men of the East and elsewhere endeavoured to explain the phenomena of being and the fundamental mysteries of the universe and expressed themselves in verse, thereby recognizing intuitively then, as we recognize now, that poetry is the best form for expression of fundamental truths.

Carl Sandburg recently defined thirty-eight points, as follows:

1 Poetry is a projection across silence of cadences arranged to break that silence with definite intentions of echoes, syllables, wavelengths.

2 *Poetry is an art practised with the terribly plastic material of human language.*

3 Poetry is the report of a *nuance* between two moments, when people say, "Listen!" and "Did you see it?" "Did you hear it?" "What was it?"

4 *Poetry is the tracing of the trajectories of a finite sound to the infinite point of its echoes.*

5 Poetry is a sequence of dots and dashes, spelling depths, crypts, cross-lights, and moon wisps.

6 *Poetry is a puppet-show, where riders of sky-rockets and divers of sea fathoms gossip about the sixth sense and the fourth dimension.*

7 Poetry is a plan for the slit in the face of a bronze-fountain goat and the path of fresh drinking water.

8 *Poetry is a slipknot tightened around a time-beat of one thought, two thoughts, and a last interweaving thought there is not yet a number for.*

9 Poetry is an echo asking a shadow dancer to be a partner.

10 *Poetry is the iournal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly the air.*

11 Poetry is a series of explanations of life, fading off into horizons too swift for explanations.

12 *Poetry is a fossil rock-print of a fin and a wing, with an illegible oath between.*

13 Poetry is an exhibit of one pendulum connecting with other and unseen pendulums inside and outside the one seen.

14 *Poetry is a sky dark with a wild-duck migration.*

15 Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable.

16 *Poetry is any page from a sketchbook of outlines of a doorknob with thumb-prints of dust, blood, dreams.*

17 Poetry is a type-fount design for an alphabet of fun, hate, love, death.

18 *Poetry is the cipher key to the five mystic wishes packed in a hollow silver bullet fed to a flying fish.*

19 Poetry is a theorem of a yellow-silk handkerchief knotted with riddles, sealed in a balloon tied to the tail of a kite flying in a white wind against a blue sky in spring.

20 *Poetry is a dance music measuring buck-and-wing follies along with the gravest and stateliest dead-marches.*

21 Poetry is a silver of the moon lost in the belly of a golden frog.

22 *Poetry is a mock of a cry at finding a million dollars and a mock of a laugh at losing it.*

23 Poetry is the silence and speech between a wet struggling root of a flower and a sunlit blossom of that flower.

24 *Poetry is the harnessing of the paradox of earth cradling life and then entombing it.*

25 Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.

26 *Poetry is a fresh morning spider-web telling a story of moonlit hours of weaving and waiting during a night.*

27 Poetry is a statement of a series of equations, with numbers and symbols changing like the changes of mirrors, pools, skies, the only never-changing sign being the sign of infinity.

28 *Poetry is a pack-sack of invisible keepsakes.*

29 Poetry is a section of river-fog and moving boat-lights, delivered between bridges and whistles, so one says, "Oh!" and another, "How?"

30 *Poetry is a kinetic arrangement of static syllables.*

31 Poetry is the arithmetic of the easiest way and the primrose path, matched up with foam-flanked horses, bloody knuckles, and bones, on the hard ways to the stars.

32 *Poetry is a shuffling of boxes of illusions buckled with a strap of facts.*

33 Poetry is an enumeration of birds, bees, babies, butterflies, bugs, bambinos, babayagas, and bipeds, beating their way up bewildering bastions.

34 *Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away.*

35 Poetry is the establishment of a metaphorical link between white butterfly-wings and the scraps of torn-up love-letters.

36 *Poetry is the achievement of the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits.*

37 Poetry is a mystic, sensuous mathematics of fire, smokestacks, waffles, pansies, people, and purple sunsets.

38 *Poetry is the capture of a picture, a song, or a flair in a deliberate prism of words.*

* * *

A Great Artist on Poetry and Ultimate Truth

A notable speech was made by Sir D. Y. Cameron, the eminent Scottish artist, when he addressed the Scottish History Society at their annual meeting in Edinburgh on "The Romance of History."

Romance in history, as in the arts, he said, was that spell of mystic beauty, haunted by strangeness of form and colour, remote from the facts and feelings of common life. It did not imply lack of strength, but associated itself with very noble, exalted, and even austere shapes,

veiled perhaps by distance, or muted by the fading light and gathering darkness. Out of those shadows of the centuries, often profound in colour and strangely lit, there emerged great figures in actions which we associated with the world of romance.

The term romance might be associated with Scottish history because so many of the men and women of events which we termed romantic were found among the shades and shadows of sorrow, the sighing of oppression, and failure, and defeat. Nations might record with pride their great victories over enemies and their conquests in the fields of labour and discovery, but poetry haunted retreats and forlorn hopes and the bitterness of unavailing struggle.

The burden of Scottish song, the croon and coronach of Gaelic minstrelsy, telling of frustrated hopes and unrequited love, with parting of broken hearts, and exile in alien hands, were in sharp contrast with the gladness of English folk songs, with their merriment and dance.

In our own time there were many evidences of revived interest in the monuments and remains of historic value. This historic sense was a rebuke to those who thought utilitarianism alone held these days. If people would look more deeply into the signs of the times they would have their faith strengthened by works which bore witness to our belief in the spiritual and historic world. If truth was beauty and beauty truth, as truly might it be said that romance was truth, because it was the deeper and higher truth, and the poetry of the spirit distilled from experience. It could not be claimed that facts cover the ultimate truth. It was poetry or romance which, gathering the spirit of men and things, gave us in terms of beauty the essence or fragrance of their lives, and the forms and colours of their acts.

A nation became great through its imaginings and its visions, and above all through its faith. Life and history were a weariness and disappointment bereft of faith and romance, but, when these comrades of the higher world brought their glory and their glamour, behold all things became new.

* * *

We have to record the death on December 14th of Lady Strachey, who was the first president of the first Centre of the Poetry Society. Greatly appreciating the basic ideas of the Society, Lady Strachey was a benevolent autocrat at Hampstead, presiding at the Centre meetings for above a decade with a keenness and firmness that allowed no departure from the original style and scope of Centre meetings. She was a very wise councillor, too, and took in particular an active interest in the promotion of the Poets' Descendants dinner. Hampstead has remained faithful to her tradition since her greatly regretted retirement through age and removal from the immediate neighbourhood.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S "MAJORITY." A CHALLENGE CUP AND OTHER COMMEMORATIONS.

Before another issue of THE POETRY REVIEW is due The Poetry Society will have entered upon its twenty-first year. The first recognition of this notable event comes from Mrs. Theodore Minshall, who is on the General Council and is also a life-member of the Society, and whose offer of a challenge cup has been received and accepted with gratification by the Council and raised the general question of how further the "coming of age" year should be marked. The matter will be fully considered later, but it has already been decided to inaugurate the year with a festival dinner on February 25th—February 24th falling on a Sunday. Mrs. Minshall's offer, expressed in a concise letter, is published for information and entries are invited from members and schools associated with the Society:

The Poetry Society, I believe, is about to enter its "Coming of Age" year. (*Floreat!* . . .)

To celebrate this happy event, and with the further idea of broadening its influence over a wider field of thought and appreciation, I propose (if acceptable to the President and Council) to give a CHALLENGE CUP for Verse Reading and Verse Speaking in foreign languages.

The following are the details of what I propose:—

That the first (annual) audition should take place in March, 1929, at Tower House, in the case of there being only a few entrants, suited to the size of the room; otherwise a larger room to be found by the Society.

Each candidate to offer TWO poems, written or published after A.D. 1500—the first poem to be read, and the second, recited—total length not to exceed six pages for the two. They may both be in the same language, or in two different ones; the languages admitted being French, Italian, Spanish, German. *Songs* intended by the authors to be sung or set to music are nor recommended.

Candidates of entirely British parentage to have 15 per cent. bonus given to them, and should have the letter B.P. printed after their names on the programme. Those of one British parent and one foreign, 10 per cent. bonus, and to have 1 B.P. printed after their name.

All candidates to be over 15 years of age; those who are under 17 to have a 10 per cent. bonus; but if they desire to avail themselves of this advantage, their age last birthday to be printed on the programme next to their name: E.G. Valorie Browne, age 16 (1 B.P.).

To any candidate winning the Challenge Cup two years running, I would give a small cup to keep as a trophy; any candidate winning the cup three years consecutively would keep the cup outright. Entrance fee for competitors 10s. each (and at least three weeks' notice to be given to the Secretary of the Poetry Society (Incorporated));

entrance fee for audience: members of the P.S., 2s. 6d. each; non-members, 3s. 6d. each. The money to be used for expenses: hire of chairs; light refreshments in the interval; printing of tickets and programmes; engraving name and date on cup.

Programme in two sections (as for P.S. Gold Medal exams.), but with a 15 minutes interval for light refreshments.

I would adjudicate the first year, and would do it by marks, with 100 as maximum; and for the encouragement of those who do well without winning the cup, I suggest that all marks over 50 should be published in the ensuing number of THE POETRY REVIEW, together with the judge's report on the event.

THE RAWNSLEY MEMORIAL GOLD MEDAL COMPETITION.

The Lady Margaret Sackville, when announcing the award of the first Rawnsley Memorial Gold Medal for Reading Poetry, for which there were twelve entries, said: "Reading aloud is perhaps a more homely, more human accomplishment than the speaking of poetry and there will always be twenty people who want to be read to than perhaps one who wishes to hear poetry recited, because poetry is too often *recited* whereas in reading people are usually less self-conscious and more natural. I have been very much impressed by the standard shown to-night and should like to provide more than the one medal. There is still too much 'elocution' in the reading, for naturally the technique of reading must differ from that of the speaking of poetry." Lady Margaret awarded the medal to Miss Esther Samms, of Luton, for her quietly effective reading and commended the performance of Miss Julie Huntsman, Mrs. T. Minshall, Miss M. C. F. Leale, and Miss Helena Gosschalk.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S GOLD MEDAL FOR VERSE SPEAKING.

The Lady Margaret Sackville, who, in conjunction with Dr. E. J. B. Kirtlan and Dr. Jagger, M.A., adjudicated at the Examination for the Poetry Society's Gold Medal for Verse-Speaking on November 17th, said, when announcing the results: My general impression this afternoon is that, on the whole, poetry is being too actively interpreted. I think we should be more passive and allow the poem simply to be sensitively recorded by our minds and then to reproduce it as simply as possible. It is the poem that should dominate our personality and not our personality the poem. To-day I have felt sometimes the unfortunate poem was being weighed down by its interpreter like a nervous horse by a too heavy rider. I also think the choice of poems not altogether happy—they were on the whole too difficult and too serious; it is rather a mistake to choose poems which are outside our own imaginative taste; it is really better to get something simple that we can interpret without any effort. I see that elocution is not dead yet, but is still rearing its head in our midst; in a word I feel that greater simplicity is needed both in interpretation and choice of subject.

Dr. Kirtlan commented on the melancholy nature of the renderings and the absence of brightness and joy. He announced that the adjudicators decided they could not award a single medal; no candidate had reached or sustained a sufficiently high standard of general artistic excellence and inspired individuality, but out of the twenty-six candidates, Doris Simms, Mary Moore and Joyce K. Parker deserved to be highly commended.

Dr. Jagger concurred, and said he had not yet been convinced that poetry could be spoken or read aloud effectively or satisfactorily.

A POETS' CALENDAR

January

1. Arthur Hugh Clough, b. 1819
2. Ovid, d. 18.
3. Douglas Jerrold, b. 1803.
4. Jacob Grim, b. 1785.
5. Thomas Pringle, b. 1789.
6. Peter Metastasio, b. 1698.
7. J. H. Frere, d. 1846; Allan Ramsay, d. 1758.
8. Alfred Russell Wallace, b. 1822.
9. William Cory, b. 1823.
10. Aubrey de Vere, b. 1814.
11. Thomas Hardy, d. 1928.
12. Burke, b. 1729.
13. Mrs. Arthur Stannard, b. 1856.
14. Charles Dodgson, d. 1898.
15. Dr. Farr, b. 1747.
16. Spenser, d. 1599.
17. George, Lord Lyttelton, b. 1709.
18. Austin Dobson, b. 1840.
19. Congreve, d. 1729; E. A. Poe, b. 1809.
20. Ruskin, d. 1900.
21. Henry Hallam, d. 1859.
22. Bacon, b. 1561; Lord Byron, b. 1788.
23. Charles Kingsley, d. 1876.
24. Earl of Dorset, b. 1637.
25. Francis Jeffrey, d. 1850.
26. Burns, b. 1759.
27. Richard Bentley, b. 1662.
28. Aubrey de Vere, d. 1902.
29. Thomas Paine, b. 1737.
30. Walter Savage Landor, b. 1775.
31. Ben Jonson, b. 1573.

February

1. A. H. Hallam, b. 1811.
2. Hannah More, b. 1745; Adelaide Procter, d. 1864.
3. George Crabbe, d. 1832.
4. George Herbert, d. 1633.
5. Carlyle, d. 1881.
6. Mme de Leirgné, b. 1626.
7. Henry Neele, d. 1828.
8. Ruskin, b. 1819.
9. Jules Michelet, d. 1874.
10. Sir John Suckling, b. 1609.
11. Shenstone, d. 1763.
12. George Meredith, b. 1828.
13. Sharon Turner, d. 1847.
14. P. B. Marston, d. 1887.
15. John Phillips, d. 1708.
16. L. Murray, d. 1826.
17. Molière, d. 1673.
18. Charles Lamb, b. 1775.
19. Copernicus, b. 1473.
20. Voltaire, b. 1694.
21. Cardinal Newman, b. 1801.
22. J. R. Lowell, b. 1819.
23. Dr. J. Warton, d. 1800; Joanna Baillie, d. 1851.
24. Keats, d. 1821.
25. Thomas Moore, d. 1852.
26. Victor Hugo, b. 1802.
27. Longfellow, b. 1807.
28. Montaigne, b. 1533.

ODE À SHAKESPEARE

O TOI dont le renom
Fait pâlir tous les fronts
Sauf ceux des plus purs parmi les poètes;
Toi dont la joie fait peur,
Toi qui ris dans tes pleurs,
Tandis que le monde interdit s'arrête,
Et, par ta grandeur confronté,
Te retrouve toujours plus haut qu'il n'a monté ;

Toi dont le nom régit
Jusqu'aux moindres esprits
Pour qui la poésie n'est qu'ombre et rêve ;
Toi par qui l'étranger
Voit ses décors changer,
Les vieux décors connus qui se soulèvent,
Ouvrant à ses yeux éblouis
Le grand vide de tes espaces inouis ;

Toi par qui l'Orient
Croit sentir l'Occident
Vibrer à l'unisson de ses chimères ;
Dont le vaste secret
Suscite l'indiscret
Essaim des biographes éphémères,
Et, comme Zeus dans ton pouvoir,
Tu les rends fous d'avoir osé t'apercevoir ;

Je ne viens point ici,
O grand Shakespeare, ainsi
Que tant d'autres verser de froids éloges ;
Nul ne m'a vu voler
Pour te les immoler
De blancs pigeons sous les plis de ma toge ;
Mais je te dis, sans plus d'ampleurs,
Que tu fus grand et que tu restes dans nos cœurs.

D'autres vont répétant
Que ton esprit quittant
Son île, eut tout le monde pour patrie ;

Qu'au delà du réel
Ton œil universel
Plongeait dans les mystères de la vie ;
Moi je te dis, Être de chair,
Tu fus Anglais et comme Anglais tu nous es cher.

L'immortel Othello
Avait dans ses sanglots
Des jurons entendus sur la Tamise ;
Cléopâtre portait
Sous ses royaux apprêts
De Doll Tearsheet l'impudique chemise ;
Et les chants d'Ophélie encor,
Les avait-elle appris à la cour d'Elsinor ?

Tu naquis sur l'Avon
Et tu plongeas profond
Dans le sol tes racines autonomes ;
Si profond que souvent
On vit leur tronc mouvant
Emerger jusqu'en Grèce et jusqu'à Rome,
Ou, dans leurs grottes profanées,
Surprendre les sabbats des démons et des fées.

Tu connus les secrets,
O Faiseur de Sonnets,
Jeune, d'aimer sans honte et sans mesure ;
Ah, pourquoi donc plus tard
Nous dire que ton art
Devait être un miroir à la nature ?
Va, tu pouvais, bravant l'échec,
Avoir le Latin faible et plus encor le Grec.

Car Dieu sut te donner,
Voulant nous étonner,
Des membres de Géant pour la victoire ;
Tu broyais en passant
L'obstacle menaçant,
Tu recréais la nature et l'histoire ;

Par toi l'océan suscité
Submergea la Bohème à grands flots irrités.

D'autres furent plus purs
Mais moins forts et moins sûrs ;
Leurs chants, montés plus haut, tombent plus vite ;
Tes pleurs sont moins amers
Et tes rires moins clairs
Que ceux qu'Athène ou que Paris suscite ;
Mais on retrouve dans ta voix
Tout Eschyle et Racine et Molière à la fois.

GEORGES LAFOURCADE.

ODE TO SHAKESPEARE: AN ENGLISH VERSION BY MR. HUMBERT WOLFE.

Thou whose immortal name
dims with its oriflamme
all save the strict cold archangels of verse;
thou who in April's fashion
weepest, whose joy is passion
that takes the world with splendour
and makes it hers;
thou, that to all who seek,
beyond the tallest, art a taller peak.

Listen! O thou that art
lord in the lowliest heart,
where verse is but a shadow and a dream;
thou who hast known strange men
with glamour alien
mislead familiar wizardries, that gleam
on eyes bewitched, impearled
with dawns in distances beyond the world.

Child of the West, and priest
of the astonished East,
met in the common magic of thy spell;
thou, whose eternal mask
bids lesser men to ask
in brief words shamed by thy long miracle;
thou, who like Zeus, bemusest
mortals that seek to use the path thou usest.

Shakespeare, I shall not trouble
thy calm with the cold babble
of usual elegies, nor, as the price
that adulation loves,
bring two milk-breasted doves
that I have stolen for a sacrifice ;
but pointing without art
" Thy home," I'll say, " great poet, is my heart."

Thy spirit (so say some)
leaving thine island home
became the Roman citizen of earth,
thy universal wit
weighed life, and passed from it
beyond the mysteries of death and birth.
Maybe ! but I have found
Shakespeare most Shakespeare in his England crowned.

Yes ! in Othello's sobs
a distant echo throbs
of oaths the men of Thames, not Venice, minted ;
and royal Egypt's dress
beneath its queenliness
hides the rude shift Doll Tearsheet grossly flaunted ;
and does forlorn Ophelia wring
the heart with songs learned from a Danish king ?

Where Avon frets her weir,
sapling of Warwickshire,
thy roots so dug along thy native loam,
that often by slow inches
from English earth thy branches
stubbornly sway in Greece or startle Rome,
or their strange shapes appal
a witches' Sabbat, or Titania's ball.

Thou knewest, Sonneteer,
love without shame or fear,
in thy gold youth, love's tyrant and his creature ;
then, having found thy heart,
why didst thou claim thine art
was nothing but a mirror held to nature ?
Why ! when through thee did speak
love's self with little Latin and less Greek ?

Yes ! God thy genius lent
for man's astonishment

a giant's limbs and giant's heart to guide them.
  Nature and history
  could only challenge thee
to set thine own victorious beside them,
  as when old ocean's ghost
drowned with great floods Bohemia's inland Coast.

  Others have been more strict,
  but thou wert song's elect,
whose lower flight an eagle's pinion carries.
  Thy tears may lack their sting,
  thy laughter may not ring
as clear as once in Athens or in Paris.
  But, Shakespeare, have no care,
Aeschylus thou, and Racine and Molière!

Dr. Georges Lafourcade, the author of the Shakespeare Memorial Ode, was born 1900 in Agen (Lot-et-Garonne), France, and studied in the Universities of Paris, London, Edinburgh, and Birmingham. He became French Assistant in the University of Edinburgh (1921), French Lecturer in the University of Birmingham (1922). He obtained first rank in the Agrégation d'Anglais (1922); was appointed French Lecturer, King's College, London (1927) and acted as substitute to the Professor of English Literature in the University of Strasbourg, 1928. He obtained degree of Docteur ès Lettres, Strasbourg, 1928. His published works include *Swinburne and Keats* (Faber & Gwyer, 1928), *La Jeunesse de Swinburne*, 2 volumes (H. Milford, 1928), and *Edéa et autres poèmes* (now printing), and he has contributed to the *Revue Anglo Amèricaine*, *Marsayas*, *Times Literary Supplement*, etc.

M. Lafourcade's *Ode* gained a high place in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Verse Competition promoted by The Poetry Society in conjunction with the Shakespeare Recitals and was awarded the Silver Medal for the best poem in the French language. M. D. Saurat, (Institut Français du Royaume Uni), the high authority who adjudicated upon the French MSS., reported that M. Lafourcade's contribution "is in several ways a remarkable production, chiefly owing to the fact that it is written in the stanza of Milton's 'Nativity Poem,' a most difficult stanza to use in French. It is poetically very good, and mixed with a vein of satire against the usual type of Shakespearean commentator. I would advise that some mark of distinction or other, according to your possibilities, should be awarded to this remarkable poem, which is technically and rhythmically an achievement."

This magnificent *Ode* is now published in the issue covering the Shakespeare anniversary period, together with a distinguished English version, by Mr. Humbert Wolfe (by permission of *The Observer*), which is in itself a tribute to and recognition of the fineness of M. Lafourcade's contribution.

A PENNYWORTH OF MAGIC

BEFORE I well remember them
To my small christening came
A crowd of roguish Fairy Folk
Of wave and wind and flame ;
They brought strange whimsies—shining gifts
Of tears and song and glee,
But one, a magic pennyworth,
And that has undone me !

I greeted them with joy, and took
Their gifts, both quaint and sweet—
Long dreams and wonder ; seeing eyes,
Quick hands and nimble feet ;
But one, between my crumpled palms,
A spark of magic thrust,
A pennyworth that stirs my life,
And will disturb my dust !

Alas for those I cannot love,
Whose eyes are fast to earth !
I fear the Fairies never knew
The day that gave them birth !
No thread of twisted, elfin light
Was pressed their hands between,
So circumspect each christening morn,
No doubtful guests were seen !

Alas for those who love me still !
I shut out Winter skies,
But something older than myself
Answers the windy cries ;
And while I sit in rosy light
Beside the glowing bars,
My soul goes out to kiss the moon
And recognize the stars.

For me, strange voices haunt the hills,
Live ripples kiss the sands ;
Great trees stand purple-robed like kings,

Stretching mysterious hands ;
And queens, who never came to earth,
Except in poets' dreams,
Call me to walk with them awhile
In moonlight, by cold streams.

Though magic has been buried deep
I cannot pass it by ;
I know the hidden names of things
In earth and sea and sky ;
Through every flower and bird and beast,
High sun and trodden dust,
Surge the immortal tides of life,
And sing of them I must !

O Folk, a troubled gift was that
You gave me long ago !
Why do you teach some mortal minds
What is not meet to know ?
You drop the star-dust on our brows,
And lift our glances high—
We stumble earth with bleeding feet
Because we watch the sky !

Dreaming, we never gain the prize
From lands we dimly see ;
But broken ships bring home at last
Our phantom argosy,
So that the treacherous wealth of life
Shrivels like fairy gold,
And hoping, planning, dreaming all,
A dreamer has grown old.

Blest be the love of common things
Content with homely ware !
Why should a mortal love a star ?
—Beauty too fine, too rare,
Elusive to our duller sense,
And not for working days,

Nor all the strife that drives the soul
Down earth's bleak, bitter ways.

Take back your magic, Fairy Folk!
It has made mock of me!
There is a madness in all dreams
Not dreamed in Faery;
A woman with an elfin touch
Is wounded, fateful, crossed,
A wanderer in border lands,
Loved, but alone and lost!

You bid me keep my pennyworth?
No choice is mine, I fear;
But may I greet you, Folk, at last,
Although you plagued me here!
So small my share—I ask in vain
What those rare mortals do
Who once received in helpless hands
*Six*pennyworth from you?

VERA I. ARLETT.

HARVEST

CRY not: "Life is too grim a master,
Whose hounds go trampling this fair land I lease."
Look to that herd of fears that works disaster
Amid the fields of peace.

Cry not: "In blessing life but cheateth:
The fruit once ripe, he hastens to destroy;"
Look to that flock of subtle greeds that eateth
The increase of thy joy.

ELIZABETH F. ALDEN.

ON VERSE TRANSLATION

THE number of illuminating articles on foreign poetry that have appeared in the pages of this REVIEW have led us to consider sympathetically that other daughter of Pierus, that shadowy half-sister of the glorious nine, that Cinderella of the Muses, Verse Translation. Meekly waiting upon her shining sisters, shaking out now a fold of their garments, now a tress of their bright hair, she will startle us at times with a glory all her own, only to fall back modestly into the obscurity of her servitude.

For the translation of poetry is servitude of the noblest kind, and he who would seek it should have many qualifications and much humility. He should be as appreciative of the language from which he translates as he is discriminating in his own, as widely sympathetic as he is minutely critical, and, although his aim is to reproduce, he should possess the creative rather than the imitative faculty—in short, he who would serve a poet faithfully by translating him should be a poet himself.

"The life-blood of rhymed translation," says Dante Gabriele Rossetti, "is that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad poem. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a nation with one more possession of beauty." And in spite of the grave difficulties of translation and of the multitude of crimes that have been committed in her name, we have many such possessions of beauty in our literature. But it is not the great epic translations that we would consider now, so much as the delicate and faithful rendering of the lyric beauties from one language into another, such as may be accomplished by those young lovers of sweet sounds who may feel a little sadly, with De Musset, that they "have come too late in a world too old," and who may be glad to be reminded that there is still this honourable service in the cause of poetry, a service that is too often in the hands of the mere grammarian and travelled salesman.

The most successful way to translate a poem is to forget the translation and remember only the poetry. In this way, the too literal rendering of some native idiom will be avoided, and the flexibility of the poem retained. It may

be even necessary to make some *slight* change of metaphor, if by such means the beauty of the thought is made clearer to the readers of another nation. No one put his own theories of translation into better practice than Rossetti himself. His English versions of early Italian poetry occupied his leisure time during many years, and it is for these translations that he is most lovingly remembered by Englishmen. Let us, for the exquisite pleasure of contemplating a perfect thing, look at two verses of his "Of the Gentle Heart." He takes a Canzone of Guido Guinicelli (1220) and gives us this English poem:

Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
As birds within the green shade of the grove.
Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love.
For with the sun, at once,
So sprang the light immediately; nor was
Its birth before the sun's.
And Love hath his effect in gentleness
Of very self; even as
Within the middle fire the heat's excess.

The fire of Love comes to the gentle heart
Like as its virtue to a precious stone;
To which no star its influence can impart
Till it is made a pure thing by the sun:
For when the sun hath smit
From out its essence that which there was vile,
The star endoweth it.
And so the heart created by God's breath
Pure, true and clean from guile,
A woman, like a star, enamoureth.

When we look at the original of the second verse we can better appreciate how finely the lines, particularly the third and fourth, have been rendered.

Foco d'amore in gentil cor s'apprende,
Come vertute in pietra preziosa;
Che de la stella valor non discende
Avanti 'l sol la faccia gentil cosa.
Poi che n'ha tratto fore
Per sua forza lo sol ciò che lì è vile,
La stella li dà valore:
Così al cor, ch'è fatto da natura

Schietto, puro, gentile,
Donna, a guisa di stella, lo inamora.

Dante, it will be remembered, had some affection for this poem of the Gentle Heart, and Francesca touchingly begins one of her stanzas "Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende"—translated by the worthy Cary—"Love that in gentle heart is quickly learnt."

Ever since Carlyle sternly reminded us of the growing greatness of German literature, and Lytton handed us the Ballads of Schiller, fine things have been done in translating from the German. But it is also true that a horde of uninspired translators wrought havoc among the German lyric writers, and laid waste much of their poetry. Englishmen have indeed revenged themselves upon Heine for his dislike of them by the violence they have done to his verse. The great songs of Schubert and Schumann were marred, for many years, for a large proportion of the English public by the witless translations that accompanied them. Much patient work has been done to remedy this, but more remains to be done. I know of a non-professional writer whose hobby it was, during his lifetime, to render unto Heine what was due to him. I still think his translation of Heine's "Es War Ein Alter König" the finest I have seen. I quote it here with the well-known original for comparison:

A king with years full laden
Whose hair was white, whose heart was lone,
He chose a lovely maiden
And raised her to his throne.

A fair young page they send her,
Golden his locks, whose thoughts were vain,
Who must with grace attend her
And bear her silken train.

Story so oft related,
First sounds so sweet, then sounds a knell!
To die they both are fate!
For they have loved too well.

Es war ein alter König,
Sein Herz war schwer, sein Haupt war grau;
Der arme alte König,
Er nahm eine junge Frau.

Es war ein schöner Page,
Blond war sein Haupt, leicht war sein Sinn ;
Er trug die seidne Schleppe
Der jungen Königin.

Kennst du das alte Liedchen ?
Es klingt so süss, es klingt so trüb !
Sie mussten beide sterben,
Sie hatten sich viel zu lieb.

There are some fine English words to many of the Brahms songs and others of that period, but a number of modern songs of real musical distinction are encumbered with bad translations. A singer once called upon me in distress with a song by Delius which had been composed to a poem by Ibsen and then made pointless by a vague translation. Time was short, but we managed to lift the English version out of the " hand in hand " and " fairy land " atmosphere into which it had been plunged in time for the recital. The delicate irony of the musical and poetic thought of this song is still hidden from many hearers owing to the indifference of the printed translation.

It is no longer a fashionable accomplishment to find suitable English verse for poetic French trifles, but it is still a very fascinating pastime. The differences of French rhythm and metre make it a stimulating exercise. Who has not tried to find in English some shadow of the lovely " Nuits " of de Musset, or of the still darker night of Baudelaire ? And which of us, in preference to a cross-word puzzle, has not pored over that tantalizing piece of French brevity, " La vie est vaine, etc." George du Maurier did, and made, if not a translation, at least a poetic paraphrase of it :—

A little work, a little play
To keep us going—and so good-day !

A little warmth, a little light
Of love's bestowing—and so, good-night !

A little fun, to match the sorrow
Of each day's growing—and so good-morrow !

A little trust that when we die
We reap our sowing—and so good-bye!

Although it is taken for granted that most people can enjoy French poetry in its original beauty, yet here again singers of many modern French songs are crying out for deliverance from the commercial translation. It is easier for most English people to enjoy French verse when it is written than when it is sung—especially by their own countrymen.

It is delightful to consider the possessions of beauty that have come to us through translations from the Celtic poets. Many of these translations have been first inspired by the translator listening to some lovely old air and wishing to give English readers a better understanding of its meaning. Mr. Percival Graves has done this for us over and over again. His English of the poem "Watching the Wheat" ("Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn") is nearer to the original beauty of the poem than any other setting, and his translation of "My Chosen One" from the Welsh of Hywel ab Owain, Prince of Gwynedd (eleventh century) has a beauty all its own:

My Chosen One is tall and lissome,
Purple her cloak as heather blossom;
My chosen joy it is to watch her face
When thoughts of grace breathe from her bosom.

And, oh! my chosen lot 'twould be to share
With her my secret and my dower,
Whose hue outshines the billow's shower,
Whose chaste Cymraeg completes her power.

My Chosen, till I die, what to thee am I?
Hast no reply? to lovely silence frozen?
Mine is indeed the maid! Let Love be not delayed,
Since thus by Heaven's aid my Queen is chosen.

It is always inspiring to be reminded of the poetic achievement of other nations. The Welsh, who have ever held poetry as something higher than politics, used, in olden times, to cease warfare that their bards might assemble in peace. Is it not possible that we, too, may find, in a

closer league of the poets of all nations and in the assembly of their high thoughts, a means of peace and of true and lasting disarmament?

EDITH REYNOLDS.

FOR MYSELF

GIVE me a caravan,
An armchair, and a frying pan,
A bath in which to make me clean,
A pen to write down what I've seen,
A kettle singing like a sage
The song that makes for wise old age,
Sunlight and leaves, the sky above,
A chosen friend, the book I love,
Hills, and a field of wild flowers,
That is my dream of hours.

Give me a widening road,
With resting places for my load,
If I am footsore by the way
A singing brook in which to stray
And hear, when hills are turning dark,
The evensong of one far lark—
To find where only God has been
The other side of what is seen—
On pages out of touch with strife
I read my book of life.

Give me a little space
In some familiar, much-loved place,
A time for leisure more than rest,
When life is turning to the west,
Where voices that are never loud
May carry me above the crowd
Into a straight and shining strand,
The fairway of a wider land—
Its gates are twelve, its stars are seven,
That is my way to heaven.

FLORENCE BONE.

NORTH CAROLINA POEMS

" Fresh flowers from my garden,
No giant lilies tall,
No hot-house orchids' blossoms
Forced on a sun-warmed wall;
But violets and pansies,
Alyssum, marguerite,
And one or two fine roses,
Dewy and sweet." *Anon.*

THE poetry of North Carolina springs directly " from the soil," as do most of the State's literary productions. While the poems of The Old North State often show the effects of wide reading, they rarely deal with foreign places or topics. They are rather fragrant with the breath of " whispering pines " and southern gardens. They tell of warm, sweet days and moon-filled nights. They sing of love, and mockingbirds, of wars long past, of hospitable homes, wide cotton fields, the beautiful heights of her Land of the Sky, the wild and tragic beauty of her treacherous sea coast.

In judging poetry, one must judge the fineness of individual lines, the fineness of the poem as a whole, and more than these, that spirit which Edwin Markham describes as, " The impassioned cry of the heart in the presence of the wonder of life." It is a combination of reality and imagination, of sincerity and idealism. This sincerity is simply expressed by Theophilus Hill of Raleigh, North Carolina, in the following lines from *The Poet's Afterthought:*

" Loyal to thy nobler self,
Neither sing for praise nor pelf,
Seem to others what thou art;
Write thy poems from thy heart!"

Not only did Hill himself follow this advice, but it also typifies the best of North Carolina poetry. Theophilus Hunter Hill was born in Wake County, near Raleigh, October 31st, 1836. He came of an old and patriotic family, and, as might be expected, was a soldier in the Confederate Army during the war between the States. After the war he edited a paper called *The Spirit of the Age*, and, later, *The Century*, both published in Raleigh. He

published three volumes of poetry, in 1861, 1869, and 1883 respectively.

John Henry Boner was essentially Carolinian, though his work kept him for many years in Washington and New York City. Among other things he did important work in publishing *The Century Dictionary* and *The Standard Dictionary*, and was editor of *The Literary Digest* until his ill health demanded that he return to the South. But while he lived in the northern cities he often longed for the old places he knew and loved so well. He was born in 1845, in Salem, which he describes as,

> " A little town with grassy ways
> And shady streets, where life hums low
> (A place where world-worn men might go
> To calmly close their fading days)."

His two volumes, *Whispering Pines* and *Lyrics* are filled with poems of the South, lyrically picturesque, such as *A Boy in the Piney Woods* and *A Memory of Boyhood*, when he tells of,

> " Floating on the gentle Yadkin in an olden-time canoe,
> Singing old plantation ballads—I and charming blue-eyed Sue—
> Blue-eyed, golden-tressed Sue."

Among the best of his group of City Sonnets is *Solitude*,

> " Do you seek solitude? Go not to fields
> Or pathless woods, or to the lonely shore,
> Nor court the privacy seclusion yields
> In some old house whose very ancient door
> Proclaims the absence of intrusive guests,
> Think not of desert waste, nor mountain height,
> Nor tropic isle, nor where the eider nests
> In arctic silence, nor the sea-gull's flight
> In voiceless azure. But for solitude
> Perfect, unparalleled, abiding, deep,
> When next you feel the solitary mood
> Insistent, trust not even dreamless sleep—
> When for true loneliness your soul entreats,
> Come to New York, and walk these crowded streets."

John Charles McNeil, who died October 17th, 1908, at the age of thirty-three, was born and spent his boyhood on a North Carolina farm, was educated in North Carolina, where he wrote for the *Charlotte Observer*. Many of his

poems were published in this paper and in *The Century Magazine*, published in New York City. Collected, they were published in two volumes, *Songs, Merry and Sad* and *Lyrics from Cotton Land.*

There is something of William Blake in lines such as these :

" Hills, wrapped in grey, standing along the west ;
Clouds, dimly lighted, gathering slowly ;
The star of peace at watch above the crest—
Oh, holy, holy, holy ! "

His songs are filled with homely peace and joy and beauty —and humour. He tells of the things he knows and loves, the peaceful beauty of the countryside, the daily duties of the farm, the happy, humorous negroes, the Scotsmen who so widely inhabit eastern North Carolina. The following verse from *Noah's Ark* shows something of his knowledge of negro character and dialect :

" I's studied all 'bout No-y's ark,
Its len'th en width en height ;
I's laid awake en studied
En drem er it at night :
En how dem three boys wut he had
Could feed up all dat stock
Beats me, 'case six mules eats enough
Er cawn fer me to shock."

In the year 1897 The Knickerbocker Press of New York brought out two volumes of North Carolina poetry : *Fugitive Lines* by Henry Jerome Stockard, professor in the University of North Carolina ; and *From Cliff and Scaur* by Benjamin Sledd, professor in Wake Forest College, North Carolina. Mr. Sledd published his second volume of poetry, *Watchers of the Hearth*, in 1902, and his third volume, *Margaret and Miriam*, in 1908. Mrs. Mary Bayard Clarke, born of an old North Carolina family, May 13th, 1827, wrote constantly throughout her full and varied life. But though she died in 1887, her poems were not collected and published until 1905. These three poets, and, in lesser fashion, a score of others, write simply, yet with fine fervour of the beauty of joy and sorrow that

make up life. And through most of their poetry runs that deep love of North Carolina, which Edwin Fuller expresses in *Under the Pines* when he asks to be buried,

> " Where the lights and shadows softly merge,
> And the sun-flakes sift through the netted vines ;
> Where the sea-winds, sad with the sob of the surge,
> From the harp-leaves sweep a solemn dirge,
> For the dead beneath the sighing pines."

Mrs. Olive Tilford Dargan has three volumes of poetry and three of plays to her credit. Of her latest volume of poetry, *Lute and Furrow*, Richard Le Gallienne, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, says, " It is a book of many themes, of feelings deep and delicate, of passionately-held convictions, of frequent verbal felicity." Perhaps the most successful poem in this group is *Francesca*, describing a beautiful young girl, lying ill of a mortal fever, watched over by a friend whom she asks to talk to her of beautiful things.

Mrs. Dargan is one of the new poets, breaking away from the Victorian rules of rhyme and rhythm. She is also more widely travelled and more widely known than most of the other Carolina poets, though the background of North Carolina hills and fields is apparent throughout her work, and here, one feels, are the things she loves best. In *I Take a Walk* her love of the mountain country is most poignant :

> " I see that the mountain is breathing to-day.
> A white mist rolls upon it ;
> And suddenly my heart is the mountain.
> My green trees, like children,
> Snatch at the climbing mist.
> It curls with laughter and moves on.
> I must wait until it is weary
> And creeps into a hollow of the mountain's arm,
> Before my heart can be only a heart again."

William Thornton Whitsett, in his *Saber and Song*, published June, 1917, established himself as a poet of no mean ability. He happily describes the poet in the following lines from *Abu Ul-Kindi* (An Arabian Tale),

> " My lad,

Arabia needs your dreams ; from dreamers come
The mighty thoughts that move a waiting world."

Young North Carolina playwrights and actors are making themselves known in the nation through the efforts of The Carolina Playmakers at the University. Paul Green, one of its members, last year won the Pulitzer Prize for his play, *In Abraham's Bosom*, produced in New York by the Provincetown Players.

Not only has their work been successful, but they have stimulated literary effort along many lines. The Federation of Women's Clubs in the State have also brought forth responses of story and song with their annual prize offers, results being published each year in a volume called *Stories and Poems of The Old North State*. The *Raleigh News and Observer* publishes each day " To-day's N.C. Poem." With these and other various encouragements and stimulations, the younger poets of North Carolina are writing with more and more strength and skill and inspiration. The love of poetry has always been in the South. Though in the past its expression has been rather shy and obscure, it seems to be growing in strength and courage, with the promise of a finer and a fuller beauty. ALINE E. HUGHES.

Aline Hughes, a daughter of North Carolina, and gifted with power to write of the charms of her native State, gives us the foregoing account of the Muse Poetic there. Her sonnet *To a Lady of Song* illustrates her youthful and pleasing pen. The sonnet was written to Miss Marcia van Dresser and will be enjoyed by her many friends and pupils—

You fill my heart and voice till all of me
Has but become a lyre of vibrant song,
Imperfect though the notes, nor strong nor free,
Because the wires are tight or tuned up wrong,
I feel that some day through these lips of mine
Will pour a perfect note, as free and clear
As singing winds upon a harp divine,
Or birds who fly and sing not knowing fear.
Yet should I ever sing a perfect song
In quality and sentiment all true,
What though the days of work be hard and long,
I'd owe each perfect note at last to you,
For you have taught me that the simplest thing
Is sweetest, clearest, truest when we sing.

POETS

Are we the wondrous creatures that men dream
That glimpse a waterfall in every stream,
That fancy diamonds in volcanic dust,
That sail seraphic through a sea of lust?
Do all our feelings soar to giddy heights,
Then fall to earth in many-coloured lights?
Move we like hidden gods among mankind
To our majestic gifts both deaf and blind?
Does each fantastic thing we do or say
Need vision under admiration's ray?
Or are we merely simple girls and men,
Thought-artists born to paint life with the pen,
Not silver-armoured heroes veiled in mist
But men and women by the angels kissed?

WALTER K. LEWIS.

INVITATION

IN that we cannot live for ever,
Not beings gods to drink the heavenly wine,
Nevertheless while it is summer weather
Come, Friend, and sample mine.

And, while we sit beneath this bower of roses
Sipping the wine from cups that know not care,
What reck we of our doubts and coming sorrows?
Hush! The gods walk the air.

F. WHITWORTH.

A WISH

GIVE me the glorious gilded afternoon
When day has reached its full maturity.
Give me a stream whose silent clarity
Is mirrored under tall green venerable trees,
Where sunlight turns each ripple to a star
That dies to prove its immortality.

JOHN B. SETON PEACEY.

CASIMIR WIERZYNSKI: THE OLYMPIC POET LAUREATE OF POLAND

THE award of the first prize for poetry at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam to the Polish poet Casimir Wierzynski was as much the recognition of a nation as of a man. For the greatest of Polish poets during the last century, whether Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Norwid or Wyspianski, were overshadowed always by oppression and revolt. Their minds dwelt on terror, injustice and a blind fate. They made liberty seem absolute only because it was unattainable and when they evolved a very interesting literature of national mysticism—Poland seen through a glass darkly, but never face to face—they betrayed an introspection that was not far short of despair.

Wierzynski is the product of a war that was for Poland, unexpectedly, one of liberation. The mood of wonder, the simple joy of being alive and free, the mere aggressive exaltation in human powers, all the characteristics that should be normal to poetry and that have always shown themselves in England, came upon Poland in a flood from the mouths of young soldier-poets who spent their days facing death. Of many groups the most notable centred in the monthly magazine *Skamander*. Of Wierzynski's contemporaries the most prominent are Julian Tuwim, Jan Lechon, and Antoni Slominski.

He was born in 1894 at Drohobycz in Poland, and he studied at Cracow and Vienna. During the war he was an officer in one of those Polish regiments which were always placed in the hottest salients and, surviving that, he came back to a life of journalism. It was no accident that made Wierzynski the successful editor of the first weekly Polish Sporting Review, for it is at the shrine of modern sport, as an expression of human heroism, that he worships the Promethean impulses of the soul. Complete men, body and soul, says Wierzynski, build all things upon joy in the fact of existence.

Wierzynski in his philosophy might call himself a

Collectivist of the spirit. Man to him is an indivisible entity, made up of body and soul. The individual joy in existence calls for the effort of living, the exercise of the bodily forces. It creates as well the necessity for a relation between the individual and his fellows, an enthusiasm for right living, for collective labour and for a universality of effort. So to Wierzynski, who looks for the expressions of human effort, the heroism of Amundsen binds itself up with the endurance of Nurmi and with the strength of every ordinary man who adapts warring circumstances to the end of living well in community with his fellows.

The spectacular success of his first volume, *Springtime and Wine* (1920) showed how faithfully Wierzynski could express the moods of a free Poland. The book went through three editions in a year—the year which saw the Bolsheviks hammering upon the gates of Warsaw—and already many of the poems which the book contained have become proverbial among the Polish people. Then followed five further volumes of poetry published in successive years, until with his *Olympic Laurel* he won international recognition at Amsterdam from a committee which included among its members Sophus Michaelis, Guiseppe Prezzolini, and Marius Leblond.

Olympic Laurel, which has already been translated into German and French, is a slim volume of fifteen poems on sport and adventure. In it Wierzynski, the only great poet of modern sport since Henri de Montherlant turned to other subjects, has had the courage to legendize the champions who are praised and forgotten by journalists. Among his heroes are Nurmi, the Finnish sprinter ; the Norwegian Charles Hoff, who holds the record for the pole jump ; and the famous sprinters Paddock (America) and Porritt (Australia). But Wierzynski is at his best in *The Song of Amundsen*, which is remarkable not only in its vigour but also in consideration of the fact that, written a year ago, it foretells the tragic fate of the Polar hero. Here the poet of the new freedom strikes a note which sets Poland and Europe a whole century away from the Partitions.

F.B.C.

THE SONG OF AMUNDSEN

From the Polish of Casimir Wierzynski

BEFORE the sleepless editorial windows
You wait, with haunted eyes and ashen lips,
Asking if there is news of me. You know not
Whither I fly or wherefore. Get you hence!
There is no word of me to-night. Go hence!

Your endless days of waiting! So are mine,
Tiring and torturing; day after day
Of wandering on those infinite seas of snow
Whose only marks are little pitiful cairns
Of bones and rotting clothing, empty tins,
The last poor traces of humanity.

Long caravans have passed along this way
Before I came. With every opening mile
I see their trail before me, till the eye
Faints, powerless to pursue. The last stained page
Of the diary, scrawled by frozen, failing hands,
Records their fate—*my* fate that you shall read.

Go hence: for there will be no news to-day.
The earth you cling to clings to me like lead.
Go hence, for I would be alone; no voice
To speak to me except the racketing hum
Of the propeller, like an unearthly choir
Throbbing amid these outer silences.

From my winged tower I map and mete and plan
The incommensurable solitude.
Behind the engine trails the streak of smoke
Flung like a lasso into space to catch
And bind these boundless wastes. So I survey
With line and plummet till the angles meet
Upon the last steep peak of all, the Pole,
Where I will rear my mark, the obelisk
Of glorious failure.
So my fancy spins,
For fate has laid upon me this dread curse
Nor can this limitless dead wilderness
Offer me mercy or remission now,
That I must be my own stern justicer

And lay this cruel sentence on myself,
To dash me like a meteor in the drifts.

This is the insane love which drives me on.
I am a meteor on the world's dark edge,
Flashing and fading into the black night,
A gleam upon my native polar skies,
A burning shaft, consumed as it destroys,
A flood of molten lava whelming all
These icy mountains, rushing down the slopes
Of endless snow. On roars the flame and licks
Round dead cold continents and isles of ice.
The globe is burning in my torrid flood.
I am the stove of God which warms the world.

And if I die, pale down, and the astral blaze
Is swallowed up in the great polar night,
In the white waste of earth, black waste of skies,
I need no succour. Food and rescuing arms
I need not now. I leave my cockpit dead.
For like the last faint streak of boreal light
My heart will falter, flicker and then die.

What else remains then? Let the ether flash
With messages to sleepless editors.
" So far I travelled, such and such the wind.
The seas, the storms, the mist, barometer
Rising and falling. Starting to return
By such a route." Suppose then I return
From the pyre where I lie cindered, back to man!

Return across your puny living world,
Blinded by mist, the false light of your praises
Deepening my darkness. Over your big city
Flutter on lagging pinions, bank and turn,
Circle to earth and land amidst your tumult
Of noise and cheers and waving handkerchiefs.
I should be helpless, dumb, like one in death
Who lies unseeing amid the heaped-up flowers,
And close my eyes to feel about my brows
The wreath of glory like a crown of thorns.

From the " Olympic Laurel."

BEYOND THE GOLDEN BARS

" The Augustan age had not quite a fair show."—J. C. Squire on " The Oxford Book of English Verse."

" The question whether from a complete knowledge of the past we can predict the future, does not arise, because a complete knowledge of the past involves a self-contradiction."—Heisenberg (quoted by Eddington in " The Nature of the Physical World").

MR. THOMAS MOULT won't stop making anthologies.[1] His excuse is that he is rescuing ephemeral verses from obscure magazines. As a matter of fact he is flinging his flimsy life-lines to healthy swimmers sitting on the beach. The poems by Thomas Hardy, Henry Warren, Siegfried Sassoon, Harold Monro, R. N. D. Wilson and others have already appeared in volume form. The *Daily Telegraph*, *Scribner's*, the *Dial*, the *Observer*, *Harper's*, the *New Statesman*—these are the most obscure of Mr. Moult's sources. A newly discovered poem, of indifferent quality, by Rupert Brooke could find its way from the *London Mercury* to the next edition of the *Collected Works* by itself. Laura Riding and Robert Graves[2] have already anatomized the anthologist in our midst (their book, like a dozen others published in the past year, is ' rescued ' from the *Calendar*—the ' Yellow Book ' of our days). It is therefore unnecessary to discuss the ' Best Poems of 1928 ' at great length. Much really notable work is included: R. N. D. Wilson's *St. Apollinaire in Classe* is a great poem, and Conrad Aiken's sonnet (from Harriet Monroe's *Poetry*) is exceptionally good.

What lunacy is this, that night-long tries,
With seven or seventy or ten thousand words,
To compass God in heaven, the loved one's eyes?
Alas! were the whole language changed to birds
And I Prince Prospero to set them free,
Though I should hide all heaven with beating wings,
Still the essential would escape, still be
Unspoken, dumb, like all essential things.
Love, let me be the beginning world, and grow
From time to timelessness, and out of Time
Create magnificent Chaos, and there sow
The immortal stars, and teach those stars to rhyme—
Even so, alas, I could in no wise move
From the begin-all-end-all phrase, " I love."

Mr. Aiken has written more ambitious poetry than that; but like all anthologists Mr. Moult plays for safety. His function is to please the birthday-present public whose poetic taste was moulded by Palgrave in their schooldays, and Palgrave especially enjoyed that vague and ectoplasmic rapture peculiar to the English Romantics. Mr. Squire's mild comment on the *Oxford Book* could be applied with fifty times the force to Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, and unfortunately the present generation, having the anthology habit, has allowed some of its faculties to become atrophied and is therefore incapable of enjoying certain modern poets such as Ezra Pound and Edith Sitwell. Indeed, these writers have been summoned to the Golden Bar and there condemned unheard by thousands who never buy themselves a single book of verse. The length to which this injustice can be carried is shown when Mr. Humbert Wolfe[3] (who should know better), indulging in a chapter of slovenly criticism of modernist poetry, utilizes only (and inexactly) the exact quotations found in *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, discusses the dazzling simplicities of an imaginary H.P. (but that may be a misprint) and brutally slanders Mr. Eliot by falsely ascribing to him the amazing line: "The nightingale cries jug-jug to dirty ears". That is unfair, Mr. Airy Mountain, and it is rude to misspell the name of Professor Crowe Ransom every time it appears.

It may be quite true to say as Mr. Wolfe does, that for the writing of metaphysical poetry: "It is not sufficient to read a popular handbook on relativity, or even to read Freud in the original. Metaphysics is not the result of bright inspirations after dinner in Soho", but it is equally true to say that criticism is not the result of bright inspirations after dinner at Jack Straw's Castle. It is utter nonsense to state that the psychological theory of æsthetic (which Mr. Wolfe asserts to be non-existent) "dismisses, without presumably having heard of it, the whole Idealist contention". Is Mr. Wolfe the only contemporary of Whitehead and Wyndham Lewis who reads Plato and Berkeley? As he timidly observes "This is obviously not the time or place to enter into metaphysical argument"

but we must remind him that the subject matter of metaphysical poetry is not metaphysics but the intellectual emotion produced by metaphysics. A person whose metaphysic is not deadly serious is incapable of appreciating such poetry. He will react to it as children do to love-poetry.

Against romantic prejudice let us set these words from the POETRY REVIEW of six years ago :

> " I have no prejudice against satire, if it is good, as Mr. Sitwell's frequently is ; but I prefer poetry, and Osbert gives us that too, although reserving in his most serious or exalted mood the privilege of sporadic sly thrusts at the Philistines. . . . The same Puck-like humour sometimes manifests itself by the sudden interpolation in a sedately serious context of a jarring colloquialism. . . . But this, after all, is a revolutionary procedure only to those whose acquaintance with poetry is either limited to the decorous products of Tennyson and his Victorian fellows or who have forgotten Byron, to say nothing of Donne—or Browning. The fact that Mr. Osbert Sitwell is not too æsthetically aloof to betray an impassioned interest in matters political, social, religious or, in a word, broadly human—is all to the good, in view of the notable tendency on the part of modern reviewers to restrict the field of poetry more and more to the purely lyrical vein. Any poet who displays catholicity or an expansive impulse is in these days pooh-poohed as a ' rhetorician ' or a propagandist. This narrow and effeminate view of the poetic function would fain exclude such giants as Dryden and (*a fortiori*) Pope from any claim to the laurel."

Now we are ready :

L'ART, 1910.

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
Crushed strawberries ! Come, let us feast our eyes.

Is that poetry ? Or do the golden bars shut it out ? It is printed as a complete poem in the *Selected Poems*[4] of Ezra Pound. I quote it because it has worried me ever since I first read it in *Lustra* two or three years ago. (I read the *Golden Treasury* at school.) I knew that Ezra Pound could write poetry reminiscent of Yeats and Browning yet showing a marked advance beyond their positions, an increase in subtlety of rhythm and psychology ; I knew that his translations of Provençal songs were as personal and living as Synge's translations of Villon and Petrarch. But I also regarded him as mountebank, always running after some

new thing and never quite catching it. I knew him as the self-appointed champion of futurism, and as a wearer of green trousers. I wondered—Tennyson, after all, wore a velvet jacket and posed as an *enfant terrible*. At the Great Exhibition his first and most important question was: "Is there anywhere in this bloody place where one can get a decent Bass?" He also wrote a lot of shocking drivel: it is reasonable to suppose that modern poets, too, have their off days. Was *L'Art*, 1910, to be dismissed with *The Skipping Rope* as a trivial failure of an admirable poet, or was I, like a person with a distaste for mayonnaise, missing one of the minor pleasures of existence?

Mr. Pound may not be a great poet, but he is a great experimenter:

> "As cool as the pale wet leaves of lily-of-the-valley
> She lay beside me in the dawn"

is the whole of Imagism—and Imagism tends asymptotically to inanity, except in language like that of Chinese poetry, rich in association. Mr. Pound, however, assimilates his innovations. The poet who can reject from his *Collected Poems* the Canzon for *The Yearly Slain* is scrupulous. He says in *Ite*:

> Go, my songs, seek your praise from the young and from the intolerant,
> Move among the lovers of perfection alone.
> Seek ever to stand in the hard Sophoclean light
> And take your wounds from it gladly.

Some of his poems possess that Greek austerity. *Near Perigord* can face the light. It ends:

> So to this last estrangement. Tairiran!
> There shut up in his castle. Tairiran's.
> She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands
> Gone—ah, gone—untouched, unreachable!
> She who could never live save through one person,
> She who could never speak save to one person,
> And all the rest of her a shifting change,
> A broken bundle of mirrors. . . .

Those rhythms and inflexions are worth mastering; they speak; and they say something which could not be expressed in prose: they are poetry.

But *L'Art*, 1910? Turn to Mr. Eliot's introduction and read:

> "Among 'poetry lovers' of the present time a taste for Martial is still more rare than a (genuine) taste for Dryden; what 'poetry lovers' do not recognize is that their limitation of poetry to the 'poetical' is a modern restriction of the romantic age. . . . The reader who does not like Pound's epigrams should make very sure that he is not comparing them with the *Ode to a nightingale* before he condemns them."

Now return to *L'Art*, 1910 and try to rewrite it in prose. You will find it as compact as Milton. Every word is used in its full poetic sense. Think of the associations—sickly green poisonous arsenical dyes (*e.g.* Schweinfurt Green), poisoned wall-papers, the reddish-yellow splash of eggs dropped on linen table cloths, brutality, a sudden jarring sweetness—all the materials needed for a prose description of certain pre-war rebellions against academic painting. It would take a page to use them. Epigram is condensed argument: it says something which could not be said with the same force in prose, for prose uses words in a restricted sense. Distinguish epigrams from 'poetry' if you like; admit you have no taste for them; but do not mistake them for bad poetry. If a piece of writing achieves something impossible for prose, you had better call it poetry.

Many of Mr. Pound's epigrams are easier than this. Some, such as *Sketch* 48 *b* 11, and *Society*, are trivial. Unlike M. Verog, Mr. Nixon is a character for prose satire—and rather a dull one. Mr. Pound's satire is often mildly astringent, like cold tea, but *The Lake Isle* is pure hydrofluoric, it stings and stigmatizes. There remains:

> Papyrus.
> Spring.
> Too long.
> Gongula.

I cannot make head or tail of that yet. The mayonnaise is dried and powdered, far too concentrated.

Why are these modern poets so difficult? Partly, I think, because they are attacking and not, like Tennyson, running away from the ugliness of Industrialism. Edgell Rickword[5] writes:—

> We will go with them by the tram
> beyond the city's lamps, and sit
> with such emotions as befit
> those born between the *Plough* and *Ram*.

and this is not out of perversity, as the ostrich tribe maintain, but because he is trying to look at this world steadily and accomplish some adjustment by his poetry so that the world may seem to have some value. Again, the modern poet observes and struggles to express more complex emotions than simple love and hate and anger. Mr. John Crowe Ransom says :

> How sleepers groan, twitch, wake to such a mood
> Is not well understood,
> Nor why two entities grown almost one
> Should rend and murder trying to get undone
> With individual tigers in their blood.

It is not a matter of reading Jung or Adler, but of observation and experience. Mr. Huxley's novel *Point Counterpoint* is a study of secondary humours such as the desire not-to-hurt-anybody's-feelings-now-even-if-it-means-causing-greater-pain-in-the-future, just as *Volpone* is a study of primary humours such as avarice. Pure greed is rare, Mr. Huxley's type of selfish sentimentalist is common, and since Meredith, poets, as well as novelists, have been claiming the right to use everyday material.

Mr. Rickword writes :

> The long, sleek cars rasp softly on the curb
> and twittering women rise from cushioned nests,
> flamingo-tall, whose rosy legs disturb
> the mirror surface where creation rests.

but he is not content with description : sometimes he tries to find an underlying truth in old illusions.

> Let eyes reflect like forest lakes
> all beasts to ancient comfort led,
> till joy to innocence awakes
> as children hug in Earth's cold bed.

he writes, still guarding that one touch of scorn which makes him try again. More often he rejects such comfort, so that his work is poetry only for those who follow him.

Miss Sitwell, on the other hand, is very simple : she

performs in the kindergarten section of the anthropological school which seeks to adjust itself to modern conditions by using poetry as ritual and symbol. Mr. Eliot is indebted to "The Golden Bough": Miss Sitwell owes as much to Perrault. In spite of scowling opposition she has made poetry amusing and has shown us that buffoonery is deadly serious, that it is an important comment upon life, that words are pretty playthings, that rhythmic eccentricity can be as enjoyable in verse as in music. (*Sir Belzebub* is as good as *Gopak*) but her art has been mainly decorative, a puppet-show, since *The Dancers* (*During a great battle*, 1916). Like Morris, Tennyson and the Rossettis, she does not live in this world. She makes occasional excursions into Dobson's Eighteenth Century, but she is usually to be found in her Victorian family residence, a rather draughty structure filled with incongruous stage-properties from warmer climates—picaroons, pagodas, parrots, ariettas, nectarines, five pointed tinsel stars and anything you see on cretonne. Her poems are essentially nursery-rhymes, delightful but childish, yet she never quite convinces herself of her "makebelief"—she is haunted by the fear of death and decrepitude. The word "seems" is the commonest in her vocabulary. She tries to defy time by building something amusing rather than conventionally "beautiful."

Her *Sleeping Beauty* is allegorical. *Troy Park* is not completely unrelated to the world we know, but now[6] she is less chary of beauty than formerly. There is the fine conclusion (recently misquoted by Mr. Wolfe):

> Come then, my Sun, to melt the eternal ice
> Of Death, and crumble the thick centuries,
> Nor shrink, my soul, as dull wax owlish eyes
> In the sun's light, before my sad eternities.

There is that even finer passage:

> Come with the African pomp and train of waves,
> Give me the darkness, my immortal shade,
> Beside the waterwells my heart hath known.
> The shepherds hairy-rough as satyrs come,
> Bring up their fleeces that are waterfull
> With freshness clear as precious gums of trees
> Where weep the incense trees from some deep smart,

So the fresh water from the fleece flows in
To fill with richness all my desert heart.

The notes contain quotations from Hegel's *Philosophy of History* and these explain the allusions to cannibalism in the title-poem. The debts to T. S. Eliot and Iris Tree are unacknowledged, and we are persistently reminded, as in an earlier work, that Miss Sitwell has known

" The terrible Gehenna of the bone
Deserted by the flesh."

That lacks the finality of Shakespeare's phrase " To lie in cold obstruction and to rot." Nevertheless, Miss Sitwell realizes :

" It is not Death which is the skeleton—
But time ; Death merely strikes the hour of one,

Night's creeping end ere light begins again
O Death has never worm for heart and brain.

Like that which Time conceives to fill his grave,
Devouring the last faith, the word love gave,

Changing the light in eyes to heavy tears,
Changing the beat in heart to empty years

Wherein we listen for the little sound
Of footsteps that come never to our ground."

A more fastidious poet would have rejected those last four lines : common emotion has tumbled into common phrasing. The word " Little " no longer bludgeons us to tears as it did in our adolescence, and " the rags of flesh about the bone " a few lines later are catsmeat after Donne : " A bracelet of bright hair about the bone."

Rather gloomy in these days, and with a nice taste in the Macabre, Miss Sitwell goes quietly on her Tennysonian way. The problem of existence seems simple to her : it is merely the problem of overcoming death. The true modernists find no such easy satisfaction. To understand their work we must turn back to the late Middle Ages, when men were trying to impose order upon diverse experience by building a single system (such as Thomism) which should include religion, science, poetry, and politics in a single unity. They failed, and started instead to differentiate between Church and State, man as worshipper and man as citizen.

They divorced morality and religion. They separated the measurable aspects of phenomena from the æsthetic, thereby founding Material science. They agreed with Duns Scotus that a proposition might be true for theology but false for philosophy.

Since that Renaissance (wrongly called), Science, Art and Religion have been separate forms of knowledge concerning themselves with the metric, emotional, and intuitive aspects of experience respectively. It is impossible to appreciate poets like Edgell Rickword and Herbert Read without understanding that the universe that the fifteenth century "knew" differed fundamentally from that we "know". Infinity was inconceivable. The Renaissance taught us to conceive it (and the poets helped). To-day we can imagine velocities of a million miles a second, we can imagine certain definite particles with position and momentum—and science says these things are meaningless. If we are to adjust our imaginations to this new world of science the poets must help us as they helped our forefathers to accept the Copernican theory; we are waiting for Einstein's Shakespeare. Attempts are being made to form a new synthesis: modern poets are not afraid to make demands upon the intellect, they do not ignore the world of the scientist and the men of science have discovered that the future necessarily contains an element of chance, not chaotic perhaps, but not predictable by science. They are learning to doubt that they can afford to neglect poetry. Mysticism has been born again in the laboratory and possibly we may recover that unity which was broken at the Renaissance. Meanwhile the languages of poetry and science are still separating; the scientist is making his more precise, restricted and mathematical; the poet is making his more widely symbolic, more allusive, more capable of organizing emotional states. Perhaps the value of poetry lies in this last quality, and poetry and science in the future will be distinguished less by the qualities of things they choose to look at than by the purpose with which they look. The poetry of to-day is helping us to accept modern material conditions, the poetry of to-morrow will provide the

emotional adjustments that must accompany the coming intellectual reorganization. Miss Sitwell is a poet of the past, Mr. Pound of yesterday (but he is running hard!) and Mr. Rickword trembles already on to-morrow's brink. The foot-rule and the golden bars are broken.

MICHAEL ROBERTS.

[1] *The Best Poems of* 1928. (Jonathan Cape.)
[2] *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies.* (Jonathan Cape.)
[3] *Monologues and Dialogues.* (Gollancz.)
[4] Faber and Gwyer. 7s. 6d.
[5] Invocations to Angels. (Wishart & Company. 5s.)
[6] Gold Coast Customs and other Poems. (Duckworth, 5s.)

WINGS

(To Floyd Bennett and the Bremen Flyers)

I sing a song of Wings that beat the air
To write in words immortal on the skies,
That blend with the eternal stars in song
And wake a note of praise that never dies.

I sing of Him Who guides the storm-clouds' march
Across that trackless space of ether there,
And in His wisdom leads the wings aright
Of those who on earth's pinions cleave the air.

I sing a song of fellowship divine,
A song that brings in union nations far
Uniting hearts of distant brotherhoods
In one glad song of praise from star to star.

I sing a song of tired wings that bore
Those gallant pilgrims to our western strand,
And of the wings that carried to their aid
That one Who gave His life for fellow man.

I sing a song of taps that sound to rest
That one who sleeps beneath a nation's prayer—
He lies enfolded in Spring's offerings,
A nation's heroes guard his resting there.

I sing a song of peace, and love and praise
For him Who died, but Whose great deed still rings
Forever in a song of gratitude
That soars forever, ever upward—Wings!

Helen Trafford Moore.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY

XXI: ALICE FAY, THOMAS S. JONES, Jr., FREDERICKA BLANKNER, THE YOUNGER VOICES.

Our America, by Alice Fay (Countess di Castagnola) (G. P. Putnam's) gives one hundred pages of sincere optimism expressed in vivid, colourful pictures about America and American traditions, events, places and types. In "The Haven" Miss Fay describes Manhattan, our metropolis:

Manhattan!
I see her scorn narrow limits and fling upward with a proud disdain,
And she says:
No one who knows me
Can cope with my witchery,
I am a paradox, I am a mystery,
Mocking, caressing,
Cheering, depressing.
Swear at me, spurn me,
You will return to me,
Follow my lure;
I am a city
Of facts and dreams,
Of pity
And scorn, and extremes:
Tenements, palaces,
Tatters and laces;
I am both rich and poor,
I am both plain and fair,
Gay, cosmopolitan,
Formal, Bohemian,
Solid as rock, insubstantial as air.

I stay with her awhile
And climb her towers,
Where myriad windows trap the gold of the dying sun
And hold for a time the imprisoned gleam
Before it is lost in the night.

In short flashing expressions she passes from Manhattan and New England to California and the West, where I am transported to familiar scenes in Arizona and the Grand Canyon. Miss Fay's graphic, able pen has caught the curious illusions that meet the eye there:

I pass from exaltation and the smiles of California
To white sands and a negation of all blossoming.

The Nevadas,
Alkali,

Wastelands again, the desert, the white desert,
Wastelands again, the desert, the white desert, like drifts of snow, so silent and so white.

Red earth, tufts of sage brush and clumps of stunted pine.
A great gash in the earth,
And, from the dizzy edge,
I look upon the graves of ruined cities :
  Babylon, Nineveh,
  And the great cities of the Nile,
  Athens and the Giant of Phœnicia ;
What towering pinnacles !
What minarets !
What stately gardens built to please a queen !
Here are the very pillars of Karnak,
There the Acropolis,
All iridescent in the dying sunlight,
The blood of their life swims around them
And the purple of their shrouds.

The cities melt,
Mauve mists appear and horizontal ridges of rose fire, the dream of a Moran.

Red earth, tufts of sage brush and clumps of stunted pine.

The Coconimo—
  Cedar and fir,
  Spruce, hemlock, juniper.
Lava-hewn gorges
And the healing chaparral.

* * *

Fredericka Blankner has won distinction as a student of Italian literature. After studying at the Royal University of Rome and doing research there under the famous Quattrocento specialist, Professor Vittorio Rossi, in the works of Lorenzo de' Medici, as Alice Freeman Palmer Fellow of Wellesley College, in June, 1926, she was granted the degree of Doctor of Letters from the Royal University of Rome with the full vote of the faculty examining committees. Her thesis subject was " L'Influenza di Dante e del 'dolce stil nuovo' sulle Opere di Lorenzo de' Medici il Magnifico." (Previously she had taken the degrees of Bachelor of Philosophy and Master of Arts in the U.S.)

Her essay, " The Influence of the *Vita Nuova* on Lorenzo de' Medici's *'Comento sopra alcuni di' suoi sonnetti* " was awarded the full Dante Prize ($100) by the Dante Society of America at Harvard University in 1924. A group of poems, "To Italy," was awarded a prize in the Illinois State Poets' contest conducted by the Chicago Woman's

Club, and her Ode on the Columbian Fine Arts Building, Chicago, was awarded the prize by the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs. A poem, " The Adoration of the Magi " (of Leonardo da Vinci) was the leading poem in the *Forum* of January, 1925 ; an interview with Mussolini (to which he placed his approving signature) was the leading article in the May, 1927, *Forum;* and another interview with him dealing with his Americanism and presenting his " Message to the American People " which he had given her, was the leading article in the magazine of the New York *Herald-Tribune*, November 21st, 1926.

In Italian literature she has been making a special study of the works of Lorenzo de' Medici, and among the moderns of Luigi Pirandello and Clarice Tartufari, whose leading short story, *The Fountain of Mystery*, she has just translated; and recently reviewed her latest novel, *The Ship of Heroes* (*La Nave degli Eroi*) for the *New York Times*.

* * *

Two recent books by Thomas S. Jones, Jnr., remind us that this American writer has a publishing record of a quarter of a century, although still less than fifty years of age.

Scholar, craftsman, artist, Mr. Jones commands a distinctive place in American letters. The titles of his works reflect his scholarly subjects : *The Path o' Dream* (1904), *From Quiet Valleys* (1907), *Interludes* (1908), *Ave atque Vale* (1909), *From the Heart of the Hills* (with Clinton Scollard, 1909), *The Voice in the Silence* (1911), *The Rose Jar* (1920), *Sonnets of the Cross* (1922), *Sonnets of the Saints* (1925), *Six Sonnets* (1926), *Akhnaton and Other Sonnets* (Mosher Press, 1928), *Sonnets and Quatrains* (Mosher Press, 1928).

The wide scope of *Akhnaton* is revealed by the titles of the sonnets, which are : Akhnaton, Zarathustra, Guatama, Lao-Tse, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Euripides, Socrates, Plato, Lucretius, Virgil, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Julian the Apostate, David, Solomon, Ezekiel, Isaiah.

" Virgil " is an example of his ability to portray a personality in the fourteen lines of a sonnet :

Low lie the laurelled Cæsars while he sings
  Of olive-press and vineyard's rich increase,
  Or upland flocks with dew upon their fleece
Drinking at twilight by Etruscan springs ;
Through their long-vanished loveliness he brings
  The golden dream where Dante found release,
  And in his music's deep autumnal peace
Grave pity broods above the tears of things.

His empire has outlasted Roman pride,
  The age of gold whose splendours half disclose,
    Through doom and death, the goal toward which men grope :
Poet and prophet, Virgil still is guide,

As when in depths of hell, heaven's perfect rose
Blossomed from inextinguishable hope.

" The Poet " from *Sonnets and Quatrains* follows :

O eyes that see the loveliness of things,
Flowers whose tender cups hold as the Grail
The dewy wine of heaven and the frail
Wonder of insects' little questing wings ;
O ears that hear when a bird freely sings,
Or when the weeping winds of autumn wail,
Or trees at twilight whisper low their tale—
The harmony from which Creation springs.

O soul that knows all longing and all tears,
Frailty of flesh, the spirit's rapt communion,
Mysterious captive spurning mortal bars—
Thy wings lift thee above all earthly fears
To hold with Love and Beauty deathless union,
To learn the glorious meaning of the stars.

The *Six Sonnets* were written upon his visit to New Grange at the suggestion of " A.E." The opening sonnet, " New Grange," reflects a mediæval atmosphere :

The golden hill where long-forgotten kings
Keep lonely watch upon their feasting-floor
Is silent now—the Dagda's harp no more
Makes sun and moon move to its murmurous strings ;
And never in the leafy star-led Springs
Will Caer and Aengus haunt the river shore,
For deep beneath an ogham-carven door
Dust dulls the dew-white wonder of their wings.

Yet one may linger loving the lost dream—
The magic of the heart that cannot die,
Although the Rood destroy the quicken rods;
To him through air and earth and hollow stream
While music winds, as two swans wheeling cry
Above the cromlech of the vanished gods.

* * *

Nathalia Crane leads the younger voices of our generation. Her advent in the writing world was a veritable illumination. It brought standing to her side the leading poets of America, in consternation, and with compliments. We will speak first of the poem with which she recently won the Lindbergh Contest, now to be found in the book published by George H. Doran, edited by Charles Vale, called *The Spirit of St. Louis*. She names her poem " The Wings of Lead," and

there follows selections from the poem, which is thirty stanzas long We will give the first :

The gods released a vision on a world forespent and dull ;
They sent it as a challenge by the sea hawk and the gull.

. . . . .

And then one night there landed on a Mineola swale
A plane that looked like pewter, with a carrier of mail.

Its wings were tinged like tea-box skins, each truss of shadow-grey,
Its cabin but an alcove slung beneath a metal ray.

" The Spirit of St. Louis " was inscribed upon the lee ;
It came from out a province that had never seen the sea.

. . . . . .

He listed in as " Lindbergh "—just one pace beyond the ranks ;
He had a moon-stained paddle and some star gas in his tanks.

. . . . .

He made the course the gods had set, the quarter quadrant glide,
He flew the full Atlantic and the tag ends of the tide.

. . . . .

The wonder of the long draw when the bowstring is a thread—
The beauty of a courage that can raise the wings of lead.

Born in August, 1913, she began her career in 1925 with her " Janitor's Boy."

In the sketch of her ancestry the statement is made that through her father, Clarence P. Crane, she is descended from John and Priscilla Alden of Mayflower days. On her mother's side, she is descended from the grand old Spanish family, Abarbanel, who counted among their numbers poets, musicians, and a Minister of State to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Stephen Crane was a long-distant kinsman ; so, too, is Dr. Frank Crane, the eminent writer. Nathalia's father was also a writer, in the newspaper world, before he entered the bond and mortgage business. From a few of Nathalia's poems the fact is readily gathered that her father had been in the army and fought in both the Spanish-American and the World War. Another Crane who fought for this country, in the Civil War, is Nathalia's granduncle, Colonel Alexander B. Crane of Scarsdale, New York, a prominent lawyer.

The Encyclopædia Britannica has much information to give concerning various ancestors of hers ; her great-grand-uncle, George P. Marsh, was for twenty years our Ambassador to Italy and a man of letters ; her great-grand-aunt, Caroline Marsh, was an authoress ; her grand-uncle, Dr. Edward A. Crane, was editor of the *American Register*, a Paris publication, and aided the Empress Eugenie in her escape from the French capital.

Elizabeth Morris, of the Scoville School: "The Rider in Purple" has illustrated her right to be among the Younger Voices:

The Riders in Purple
Are come on swift horses
And sounds of their hoof-beats
Fill plains and fill mountains.

The Riders in Purple
Are galloping faster
The Riders in Purple
Come nearer and nearer
Filling the earth with their cadence and roar.

And the sound of the wind
Is the breathing of horses
A-galloping onward
In search of their plunder.

And, hung, 'cross their saddles,
A gift they'll be bringing,
A gift that the wise men
Will never be fearing,
For it is a gift that was given of yore.

The Riders in Purple,
They come from afar off,
They come from mist-places
With dew on their foreheads.

And when they are passing,
Shining afar off,
A mantle of slumber
Falls trailing, falls trailing,
Wrapping the palace . . . and hut of the poor.

* * *

The youngest voice of all, age seven, that I am including, is Margaret A. Faucon, living in London:

Oh, how I love the Moon!
Oh, how I love the Sun!
Oh, how I love the little Stars!
And how I should love to run

Into the heart of the Sun,
Into the heart of the Moon,
Into the heart of the trembling Stars,
I shall be there quite soon.

I wonder how long it would take me
To travel up so high,

Into the hearts of the Sun, Moon, and Stars,
That live about the sky.

The Sun comes out at the break of day,
He generally begins in the month of May,
And all the children's voices ring,
With Spring is here, oh, Spring!

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

A SELECTIVE AND WORTHWHILE ANTHOLOGY

In late December comes annually a collection of verse assembled from accredited periodicals. In the valuations of William Stanley Braithwaite (*The Anthology of Magazine Verse for* 1928 and *Yearbook of American Poetry*, edited by William Stanley Braithwaite: Harold Vinal, Ltd.) it is the year's best and most permanent. Actually, his selecting must end in July, when plans for the presswork of the book must go forward. But considering the tremendous work of reading and holding open-mindedly to thousands of pages, six months must be adequate—to satiety. No such feeling lies on the spirit of the book. It seems a complete expression of current poetry. With the volume in hand one feels genuine appreciation of the labour and the sincerity of Mr. Braithwaite. He has dependable taste. Five hundred poems from nearly three hundred poets are a consistent delight. They are vivid, characterful and of excellent technique. Few and far between are the gleams that flash when genius excites the pen, but this volume represents the crest of the year's gathering from the newspapers and magazines. With this limit in mind; with the further knowledge that many of our most gifted poets appeared only in book form (some to be best sellers this year); and the poetry magazines have a most uneven yield, the volume wholly justifies its intention. Beauty, spiritedness and human rhythm slighten every choice. The poems are contrastingly placed. The book is not tedious. Dominant qualities can be seen from these three poems chosen at random.

NORWICH MILL POND: WINTER AFTERNOON

Ice demons crack a hundred hidden whips
As daylight wanes, and purple shadows grow,
Seeking the East with slender finger tips
Then silence falls; and lightly over snow
There steals a murmur from forgotten lips,
The ghost of laughter perished long ago.

Alexander Laing.

A CAROL OF COLOUR

(As the brown race see it.)

(This carol uses the tradition, made familiar by *Ben Hur* that the

three wise men came from Egypt, India, and Greece: thus typifying the worship of the Christ-child by the black, brown, and white races.)

"I may not sleep in Bethlehem,
Your inns would turn me back—
Because," said Balthazar, unsmiling,
"My skin is black."

"I may not eat in Bethlehem
Your inns would frown me down
Because," said Melchior, uncomplaining,
"My skin is brown."

"Alone I ride to Bethlehem,
Alone I there alight,
Because," cried Gaspar, all unheeding,
"My skin is white."

Not one, nor two, but three they came
To kneel at Bethlehem,
And there a brown-faced Christ-like-child, laughing,
Welcomed them.

Mary Jenness.

HERE LIE

Here lie
Her beauty and her pride,
And all the secret thoughts
She kept inside
Her long white body
Until she died.

What no one ever knew
Will crumble with her dust,
What she thought of us
Whom she did not trust.
We will leave it there,
Because we must.

But though she is dead,
We who knew her will
Remember her high head.
Pride is hard to kill.
It is, you see, as though
She ignored us still.

Louise Driscoll.

Though the collection demonstrates particularly the judgments of

Mr. Braithwaite, it sets forth, *per se*, the taste of the various editors of the magazines represented. Then follows an index of poets and poems published in American Magazines; some articles and reviews of poets and poetry published; some volumes of poems published during 1927 and 1928; a select list of books about poets and poetry; list of magazines publishing, with their addresses. Here is general information to the writer, brought to date. It becomes an important reference book.

This is the sixteenth annual volume. The entire number is a trustworthy historical survey of "usual" American magazine verse. During the sixteen years, Mr. Braithwaite has followed through the schools, the trends and the main currents with consistent detachment, to make his foreword in each volume of unique interest. Every word of his introduction would tell our English poetry-friends a year's summary of struggles and triumphs in waste places, well-trodden paths, and blazed trails.

"The year 1927-1928 presents some astonishing figures. Mr. Robinson's *Tristram* has climbed pretty close to the 70,000 mark; the fact that it was the Literary Guild selection, of course, was something of a determinant towards its sales success; but it must be remembered that the Literary Guild had just got going, and *Tristram* as its third selection went out to about 10,000 subscribers.

"Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body*, the August (1928) selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, and warmly welcomed by The Poetry Review, was distributed to 70,000 subscribers, which is the beginning of a sale that may well reach toward a second hundred thousand. . . . The Poetry Clan, established by Miss Monroe, . . . sends out to its subscribers six volumes of poetry a year, one every two months, membership in which costs $12.00. . . . The five books distributed by The Poetry Clan to date, are: *Boy in the Wind*, by George Dillon; *Ballads of a Singing Bowl*, by Marjorie Allen Seiffert; *Hale's Pond*, by James Whaler; *Outcrop*, by Abbie Huston Evans; *Trivial Breath*, by Elinor Wylie. . . . It is much commoner now for a larger number of books of poems to run into more than the first edition. . . . Dorothy Parker's *Enough Rope*, not yet two years old, has already sold 25,000 copies; her most recent book went into a second edition before publication; and Samuel Hoffenstein's *Poems in Praise of Practically Nothing*, from publication in March of this year, to June, had passed through seven editions." This foreword plainly indicates that the cultured American must have his poetry just as much as his novel or biography.

Mr. Braithwaite speaks little regarding the innumerable poetry magazines with differing slogans or characteristics that give hearing to crude or finished execution and idea—perhaps because his reprinted matter indicates only the best. The reader can realize what rejections took place. The country is flooded with sectional poetry organs or monthlies that subsist on subscriptions made up from the gratified

contributors. These keep faith with themselves but not with poetry. Others keep faith with poetry and a too restricted prejudice of standards which limits their subscribers. Only one *weekly* has yet appeared, but unfortunately bearing entertaining matter, of proportions suitable to a weekly appetite; *Japm*, edited by Benjamin Musser, steadily bears out its original ideals. The majority of poetry lovers will accept readily the serious discriminations of Mr. Braithwaite, which give us a year's worth of the best of the poetry without subscription to countless good or tedious poetry magazines. For in this Annual Anthology even the dead level has some vitality about it.

H. HARTNESS FLANDERS.

FLIGHT

Climbing the levels of air they come,
  Swift as never an eagle flew,
Pioneers of the rolling cloud—
  The reaching wind—the abysmal blue.

Mountain and desert echo the drone
  Of the great grey birds that sing as they go;
Rivers mirror the tireless wings;
  Oceans throb and thunder below.

Does the news flash out to a host unseen—
  Columbus, Peary, all souls of fire
Whose courage ventured the unattained
  And won to the peak of a high desire?

Does the heart of Magellan quicken and beat,
  As it slumbers far from the coast of Spain,
Dream of a dim horizon line
  And the gleam of a virgin wave again?

Sky and sea shall remember them,
  And men in honor their names shall write
Who have woven around the spinning world
  The magic golden girdle of flight.

ETHEL DE B. LASKY.

In addition to M. Lafourcade's Ode, we print on another page Miss Hickey's quatrain which was placed high among the American MSS. in this section of the Shakespeare Verse Competition.

Our good friend, Dr. Henry Meade Bland, is a candidate, warmly supported by a strong committee, for the Poet Laureateship of California—a State appointment.

AUSTIN DOBSON: DEAN SWIFT: THE CREAM OF CONTEMPORARY VERSE

Austin Dobson, though recognized as a great man of letters—always repolishing his work and adding to his store of knowledge—is usually accepted as a "minor" poet. In a chapter of Mr. Alban Dobson's book (*Austin Dobson, Some Notes*, Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.) Professor Saintsbury indicates some of the arguments against this assumed "minority." It is questionable how far mastery of a single type of poetry is a criterion of greatness, but Austin Dobson has indeed obtained perfection in the "occasional poem" or *vers de société* as it used to be called. He can turn a villanelle with the best of grace, and pack a vast amount of thought into a dozen airy lines, master as he is of suggestion. The old French forms which he revived are not easy to the poetaster although they look so simple; it needs good workmanship to achieve the lightness of, for instance, this:

"On London stones I sometimes sigh
For wider green and bluer sky;
Too oft the trembling note is drowned
In this huge city's varied sound;
'Pure song is country born'—I cry.

"Then comes the spring—the months go by,
The last stray swallows seaward fly;
And I—I too!—no more am found
On London stones!

"In vain!—the woods, the fields deny
That clearer strain I fain would try;
Mine is an urban Muse, and bound
By some strange law to paven ground;
Abroad she pouts;—she is not shy
On London stones!"

However bold his Muse, Austin Dobson's own persistent modesty caused him to leave instructions forbidding anyone to write a memoir of his life, but, as his son points out, these will make no difference to possible future biographers, and it is well that someone who has known the poet intimately should compile the facts about him before they become unrecognizable in time's lumber room. This book is not a biography although the few salient events in the poet's life are given in the first chapter—his birth at Plymouth in 1840 into a family of civil engineers, none of whom had any literary associations, his uneventful schooldays ending with his entry into the Civil Service at the age of sixteen, where he was to stay for almost forty-five years. There he met Cosmo Monkhouse, whose friendly rivalry probably induced him to publish his first poem in "Temple Bar" in 1868, and later his life-long friend, Edmund Gosse, another whose critical interest and sympathy were chiefly responsible for the great flow of poetry that

followed in the 'seventies and 'eighties, and the mass of essays and biographies of his later years.

During two-thirds of his life, Austin Dobson lived a quiet family and business life at Ealing and, as Sir Edmund Gosse says in his appreciation, " the task of appraising him although difficult because it demands observation of secret phenomena, is so far simplified that it has to deal exclusively with mental processes. The critic is not distracted by any extraneous circumstances, as is the case in the biographies of most eminent men of letters."

Mr. Alban Dobson gives a selection from his father's letters, a difficult task, as the poet seldom destroyed one, while he numbered among his correspondents such famous names as Anthony Trollope, Oliver Wendell Holmes, G. F. Watts, Théodore de Banville, W. E. Henley, Thomas Hardy, Robert Bridges and many others. These letters throw valuable light on the literary world of the late nineteenth century, and are an interesting commentary not only on Austin Dobson's own work, but on that of his contemporaries in this country and elsewhere. Is there a comparable circle of correspondents to-day we wonder, or do our poets use the telephone rather than the laborious pen? Many of these letters are most entertaining, and adorned with rhyme, sketch, or epigram; the postman, too, of forty years ago had his share of fun when he delivered the envelope addressed thus:

" To Austin Dobson, Bard, Esquire,
Who deftly twangs the graceful lyre,
With wondrous taste and feeling:
I trust this letter will arrive,
Quite safe and sound at Seventy-five,
In Eaton Rise, at Ealing! "

It is always a pleasure to see great people unbend. John Drinkwater has written a delicious book of " kiddie " poems, *All About Me* (Collins, 7s. 6d.). One kind of " kiddie " poem differs from another in deliciousness, and those of Mr. Drinkwater differ ostensibly from those of Mr. A. A. Milne and Mr. Humbert Wolfe. They are attractive in their own particular way, and have proved very stimulating to H. M. Brock as illustrator. " Matilda, Queen of Spain " is quick to quote . . .

Matilda, who was Queen of Spain,
Decreed that no one should complain
If, when they sent her all their rain,
She had it all sent back again.

The author of *Songs of a Hermit* (Epworth Press), Mr. Gilbert Littlemore, has created what may be better than great poetry . . . great friendships. The children of whom he writes are richer in friendship than they perhaps know. The reader of the poems is soon

made aware that love for his subjects is the first thing that counts with the writer of them.

Mr. Frank Ernest Hill, the author of *Stone Dust* (Longman, 7s. 6d.), must be ranked with those happy few who can treat the modern theme of industrialism with vigour and lyricism. Though he deprecates the cities where :

> . . . the year will go
> Insensible from summer into snow,

and though he charges himself with being part of the destroying " hurry of desks and trains," yet he still avers that :

> The soul walks proudly down the droning street ;
> Under the roofs of stone it keeps its pride ;
> Noise cannot quench its word, haste cannot hide
> The blaze of it—self-fed, intent, complete.
> Cycles of war and ships and harvest heat
> The soul has known, and love at ebb and tide,
> And wind in crystal waves, and wings that ride
> A whistling way of space and star and sleet.
>
> The clay brick cracks, the cloth of gold hangs tattered,
> The diamond sleeps in dust. The sea, the frost
> Eat the bronze portal. Words that greatly mattered
> Rot into mould, are ash the wind has tossed ;
> But the soul walks—unmarred among things shattered,
> But the soul walks—complete among things lost.

His air poems are memorable for their unique descriptive power and thoughtful application, but with " The Abiding Moment " he can force us to share and to keep the ecstacy of his mood.

Miss Christine Orr is another writer of distinction. *The Loud Speaker* (Porpoise Press, 3s. 6d.) shows a concision of thought and diction that is a result of wide exploration into both mind and vocabulary. Her treatment of scientific things in the title poem, when

> . . . Big Ben
> Annihilates distance at the stroke of ten

is unhesitating. So is her handling of Elfin things in the incantation of " Hallowe'en " . . .

> Who called ? Who was it came ?
> The dead are out to-night. The windy dark
> Of their eternal travail presses round
> Upon the guttering flame of our brief mirth.
> Our laughter flies and echoes down the draught
> That follows them, shattering itself on silence.
> Who called ? Who came ? They are about us all.

Our thoughts are tangled in their troubled hair.
They pass. Oh, pray ye see them not! For he
That sees their passing shall be joined with them.

Ignotus, the new book of poems by Evarts S. Scudder (Duckworth, 6s.), is definitely enjoyable. Most of the poems are short, the longest being the one which names the book—the song of a twelfth-century pilgrim inspired by the splendours of a sunset, which is really one of the songs that have circled in the minds of poets since time began.

"The spirit awakens, and will not be denied;
The future beckons—who will fling wide the doors?
Even now they strain and burst, as doth the dawn
When the sun's chariot thundering in the east
Made all the heaven a splendour. We shall not lose,
Though in the vale men still call Roncesvalles
The clear far note of our endeavour rise
Too late to save us dying as we have lived—
With the wild brightness on the mountain-tops
And the deep shadows gathering in the vales
We fought in, and the silence after all."

Mr. Scudder has a sense of rhythm and of the beauty and value of words; although at times he may fling too much colour on the canvas, for the most part he frees his thoughts gracefully and achieves strength by his restraint, particularly in the few love poems included in this book. That his thoughts are not all strewn across the surface of his work is to this poet's credit since it is worth while digging for them, as he has something to say—not particularly clever or striking, or even original, but merely wise, sincere and, on the whole, optimistic.

"There is a task to do—we must be strong,
And with a trumpet song
Scatter the mists that hover overhead:
There must be good things done and good things said."

We do not want to quote too much from so slender a book, but we commend to the attention of critics the sonnet written on the last page of a modern novel, not only for its execution, but because of the sentiments expressed.

The best poems in the Earl of Sandwich's new book, *In a Green Shade* (Elkin Mathews and Marrot, Ltd., 5s.) are those about places and occasions which the author has obviously enjoyed. In "The Solent" the tang and colour of the sea are conveyed by an apt choice of word and simile, and there is again a taste of salt water in "Termini" which we quote in full.

"I marvel that it dares the sea,
This coasting craft of Sicily,

Of topsail-schooners, brigantines
So light in ballast, without means
Or a scrap of tar upon their hulls,
Or spares for bending in the lulls.
Yet stiff they must be, to withstand
The squalls that hiss down from a land
Of mountains; stiffer yet, the barques
When buried to their lading-marks
With lemons, gathered oranges
From sunny orchards to the quays
In carts that challenge them in paint
To storm bad weather with a saint."

When this poet treats of the countryside and all the pleasant sounds and sights of every day, he touches them lightly and musically, but is less successful when he becomes philosophical. His meditations at an art exhibition are humorous, if somewhat involved, but, because of its simplicity, "Perfection" is more a telling comment on modern life.

We said in these pages a short time ago that it is not yet the part of a poet to add an explanatory foreword to a book of verse. Mr. E. R. Dodds introduces his book (*Thirty-Two Poems*, Constable) with a long note on "unprofessional poetry." He explains that he publishes, first because he desires "not only to express but also to communicate," secondly, because his neighbours need an example before they will do likewise and so satisfy Mr. Dodds' curiosity with regard to the "less visited districts" of their souls. We are particularly considerate of "unprofessional poetry," yet we think there is no necessity for this long preamble; the poems are too good to need any excuse for their appearance. They flow along easily and naturally, technique balancing idea; there is always harmony whether the subject be metaphysical, romantic or descriptive. Perhaps the best is "Low Tide on the Foreshore at Merrion," of which this is the first verse:

"To-night there is nothing, nothing at all, down on the strand.
Even the women who gather cockles have gone away.
The adventure of waters has ebbed away from the grey sand,
All but a dribble of white foam on the lips of the bay."

No wonder this Irishman is homesick. We hope he will give us more poetry and not shut it away in a desk for too long.

The poems in *A Soldier Looks at Beauty* by Hugh P. F. McIntosh, M.C. (Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., 3s. 6d.) are a young soldier's impressions of beauty seen during days of routine in barrack and camp, and, later, from the hospital windows. His perceptions of the loveliness in common things—tents, lamps, poplar trees—is strong right through the book and though occasionally the contrasting ugliness which haunts him may upset the balance, he can, with a few touches create

a picture so truly and surely that the scene springs up before the reader unforgettably.

There is something essentially his own in the way this poet looks at the world and thinks about it; we much regret that he will write no more.

"In the time of the lambs and the whins to go forth to the slaying,
In their hour of bugles and gold to chance to be slain—
For a life that has loved and may lose them, herein should be pain,
And lo! there is laughter and peace beyond threat of dismaying.

"For my risk, it is, raises their banner of blossom and gloom,
And my mood, it is, broods o'er the bruit of their bugles weak,
And I see, and I hear, and I find them because I must seek
Others than they 'midst the fires and the cryings of doom."

The fourteenth volume of essays and studies by members of the English Association, collected by Professor Garrod (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.) will appeal to anyone interested in English literature; they vary from a close examination of the "Ancrene Wisse and Hali Meidhad" by Mr. J. R. R. Tokien to an analysis of Charlotte Brontë's artistic processes and her place in the evolution of the novel by Miss Janet Spens. A study by Mr. Percy Simpson emphasizes Marlowe's own grand conception of his "Tragical History of Dr. Faustus" and the ruin brought upon it by adapters who attempted to popularize it. Professor Oliver Elton's essay on "The Poet's Dictionary" is the most interesting contribution from our point of view. As the carpenter's medium is a block of wood, so the poet's is the mass of words ebbing and flowing through the language. But words are live things "shaped . . . by a million dead and living artificers, and put up a stiffer resistance than a block." They have three aspects, from a poet's point of view, sound, association and intellectual content, and Professor Elton, himself a poet, deals with the latter only. After dividing the whole store of words into ten groups he separates those types which may legitimately become the poet's stock—types more diverse than one usually supposes—but it needs a master to weld them into poetry.

The Ryerson Press continues their series of Poetry Chapbooks with *Later Poems and New Villanelles* by S. Frances Harrison (60 cents), and *Fragments of Fantasy* by Nelda MacKinnon Sage (50 cents). Mrs. Harrison, who, though at one time a journalist, has been as well "musician, composer, novelist and poet of distinction" is now inclining towards botany, and begins her chapbook with a versified introduction to the Canadian flora. After this sea of adjective and metaphor (and one or two smaller floods) the monotony of the villanelles, with their three-line verses and two rhymes, is certainly

restful, while the sentiments they express will not awaken the slumberer. In the writer's own words,

> " And over Life has crept a lull
> Half-rooted in despair."

Mrs. Sage's poems are a little thin or, rather, a little narrow, being sometimes only one word broad. It is a pity that " Solitude," the most ambitious poem in the book, is so involved, because its similes and imagery are good and do suggest something of the sublimity of nature. But we see no reason to cut prose into short lengths and so lose all its flow and dignity, even if sense and grammar were never present.

Pilgrimage, Austin Clarke's new book of poems (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 3s. 6d.) deals, like much Celtic poetry to-day, with the stuff of legend—priest and pilgrim, Queen Gormalai and The Young Woman of Beare, seas and storms of long ago. All these are worked into the tapestry of Mr. Clarke's poetry with so great a cunning that we forget his skill. His use of assonance is extraordinarily effective and gives a quiet musical undertone that enchants the ear. In its simplest form, here, " the tonic word at the end of a line is supported by a vowel-rhyme in the middle of the next line," but most of the patterns are more complicated ; we give a short poem, " The Planter's Daughter," as an example :

> " When night stirred at sea
> And the fire brought a crowd in,
> They say that her beauty
> Was music in mouth.
> And few in the candlelight
> Thought her too proud,
> For the house of the planter
> Is known by the trees.
>
> " Men that had seen her
> Drank deep and were silent,
> The women were speaking
> Wherever she went—
> As a bell that is rung
> Or a wonder told shyly,
> And O she was the Sunday
> In every week."

That a single county should have produced as many poets as are represented in the Golden Treasury, many of them poets of distinction as well, is an extraordinary and unexpected revelation, and all credit is due to Dr. Poole and his colleagues for producing, in the *Poets of the*

Shires series, such a volume for Staffordshire (Ling and Co., Lytham). Instead of filling his book with a great deal of indifferent verse, the editor has chosen only the best for his extracts from each poet, and has included in every case an excellent biographical note, several of them being judicious and full monographs by Captain Charles Masefield, Russell Markland, St. John Adcock, and other reputable authorities. We are glad to see among the modern poets who are included our friends Vera I. Arlett and Wallace B. Nicholls, and to know that amongst the Staffordshire poets are such names as Samuel Johnson, Edward Augustus Freeman, Richard Garnett, Robert Buchanan, Sir Henry Newbolt, Alfred Noyes, Mrs. Craik, and Ellen T. Fowler. We feel that we are quite justified in repeating what was printed in THE POETRY REVIEW with regard to the previous volume in this series, (Warwickshire), that this work "should prove of permanent importance to the student of literature," especially as Dr. Poole has not succumbed to the temptation of venality which tends to depreciate so many compilations of this kind. But we wish the editor would not divide "poetesses" from the poets.

It is surprising that poets do not show a more lively interest in music, for, after all, rhythm is a vital factor in any verse, and music is but rhythm expressed by sound as opposed to words. The reason is, presumably, that poets think that the music of words is far more pleasing to the ear than any sound produced by the best of orchestras, which is, however, no excuse for the appalling ignorance of some of our most famous poets of the very least rudiments of music, and for the self-satisfied carelessness with which they write down their ridiculous statements. Dr. F. W. Naylor, in *Poets and Music* (Dent, 6s.), points out these errors, and explains the allusions found in a dozen or so of our greater poets with such masterly clarity and scholarly understanding that he is eminently successful in achieving his aim of bringing music nearer to the student of literature.

Holyrood (Dent, 6s.) is a new anthology of modern Scots verse which might be taken at first glance to illustrate the articles that have been appearing in the POETRY REVIEW on the revival of Scottish poetry. Unfortunately, however, as the editor, Mr. W. H. Hamilton acknowledges, this is not a collection of the best modern Scots verse—"the poems have been chosen to fit the plan of the book—which is a little epitome of human life—and many of great beauty have therefore not found a place"; neither is it representative of the new nationalist movement—many of the poems are no more exclusively Scottish in spirit than they are in letter. Those in Scots, whether that of Dunbar, Burns, or of our own day, are on the whole successful, and, though they generally chronicle small beer, they escape the sentimentality which so often ensnares northern dialect writers. Several contributors are little known and it says much for them that at least they do not

shame their neighbours. Much beauty is, indeed, shut between the covers of this book, and we hope Mr. Hamilton will take courage and make a larger one more truly representative of all the music that rings out to-day from north of Tweed.

Swift's Verse, an Essay, by F. Elrington Ball (John Murray, 15s.), is a formidable and scholarly work constituting a really human study of Swift's development as a poet. It brings his large output of verse into relationship with the events of his life and times, and shows what tremendous power he wielded with his satirical ballads and " Excellent New Songs " upon politicians and parliamentary affairs of the day. It traces the growth of his familiar style and the effect on him of Addison's influence, Prior's fellowship and his friendship and admiration for Pope. Several new poems, and some not hitherto attributed to Swift, are no iced and a number printed in the appendices. This is a book that will prove invaluable to the student of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries whether from a literary or historical point of view, and may be read, too, in relation to contemporary events which sadly lack satirical treatment.

The latest volume in the Modern Readers' Series published by Messrs. Macmillan, is a new edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, at the modest price of 5s. The book is produced in compact and, acceptable format, and contains a thoughtful and sympathetic preface by John Valente, who, as professor of English at Hunter College, New York, is excellently qualified to speak of the greatest exponent of free verse there ever has been, or, possibly, ever will be.

It is a change for music lovers to hear about forms of their art other than those to which they are accustomed, and it is therefore with great pleasure that we greet the appearance of a book by Mrs. Ethel Rosenthal, for some time resident in India, on *Indian Music and Its Instruments* (Reeves, 7s. 6d.). The author has obviously given an unusual amount of trouble to her study of this absorbing subject, and, considering its price, which is very moderate for so comprehensive a volume, she may be congratulated without reservation on having done much to achieve the end to which she looks in her preface, when she states that she " has striven to acquire some comprehension of the psychology of the Indian people and of the Land of Wonders. . . . Perchance this book may act as a link to reinforce the chain which unites music-lovers of East and West." Full of quaint lore and descriptions of unfamiliar instruments and peculiar musical modes, with a chapter on the allied arts of music, poetry and dancing, in which mention is made of modern poets who have seriously developed the vocal interpretation of their own poems, this authoritative work increases our admiration for the talented versatility of a colleague, who, as Miss Ethel Rayson, will be remembered in London for her knowledge of and devotion to

the associated arts of poetry and music and her erudite lectures and articles on "The Poetry of Poland" and "Modern Portuguese Poetry."

The indefatigable Mr. Brimley Johnson has brought out a selection of Shelley's letters (The Bodley Head, 6s.) as a companion volume to *The Letters of Robert Burns* which he edited so successfully not long ago. This does not pretend to be an exhaustive collection, but it is perhaps a pity that Mr. Johnson does not include more of the letters which have only lately come to light and are therefore absent from most of the better known collections. The introduction to this volume contains a short sketch of the poet's life, always an invaluable adjunct to a book of letters, and especially necessary, perhaps, in the case of Shelley who felt so intensely towards so many different people at various times that without a guide to the external events of his life it is difficult fully to appreciate the tenour of his letters.

It is seldom, I am ashamed to say, that, after finishing a book of poems, I do not give a sigh of relief. For the first time for far too long—some of the blame *must* rest on the poets, as well as on me—I have put down a book with a strange feeling (for it is experienced all too rarely) of wishing for more. The book is *Silver Scutcheon;* the author, Mabel Posegate, a *Poetry of To-Day* contributor; the publisher is Harold Vinal of New York; the price two dollars—and worth it.

Again I must make a confession. As soon as I see a poem with fourteen lines in it, first I count them to make quite certain, and then pass them on to someone else. To me the sonnet has always been a sentimental and "written-to-order" type of poetry, generously larded with false and high-sounding adjectives. Mrs. Posegate, however, has discovered some magical way of making the sonnet seem as if it were not a stereotyped mould, but rather the natural way of writing verse. I shudder to think, that if I had but glanced inside the book before I took it away to a place where there was no one to relieve me of it, I should have robbed myself not only of the pleasure of reading the book, but also of the honour of being able to add something to the very large quantity of praise that must, if justice is done in a book-ridden world, accrue to Mrs. Posegate. She admits that she "learned to love the sonnet late," and it is my heartfelt and anxious hope that she will not discard it as a child discards a toy whose novelty has palled; because no book is faultless, and my one complaint against this one is that it is not all sonnets. In my humble and prejudiced opinion, there is only one poem in this book that is successful and is not a sonnet, and I feel bound to quote it. It is called "Remembered Sorrow," and it nearly made me weep:

> "Oh, mother, it is raining now
> Just as it rained that day

Three years ago
When my poor rabbit died.
I still remember how I cried;
My father would not let me go
Into the storm,
And well I knew
My rabbit was afraid.
A long time after
When I went to him
I hugged him in my arms
And prayed
That he might be unhurt;
But he was wet,
And oh, so cold,
And late that night
He died."

I have an idea that that is a memory that has lasted for more than three years!

As I have said, I cannot explain how or why these sonnets please me so much. The only thing to do is to quote one of them, "Summer Sleeps," and if you don't like it, well, then I beg your pardons. It is *my* sincere and honest opinion that here we have a very genuine dynamic of American poetry, but please get her book and decide for yourselves.

A night like this a queen might choose to die.
The winds are up—some stars their torches lend
To light spent Summer the sad way she'll wend
Down Autumn's leaf-strewn stairs where she will lie
In tarnished grave-clothes hidden from the sky
Upon a mildewed couch. Is this the end?
I weep, for I have been this gay queen's friend;
I loved the glamoured sparkle of her eye.

When in the garden and the rose-wreathed hall
Her perfumed garments flutter never more,
And only ghostly footsteps tread the shore,
How poignantly her beauty I recall!
A youth named Spring light-hearted vigil keeps,
Averring that she merely sleeps.

Our Tounis College (Darien Press, 3s. 6d.) is an anthology of verse written by those who claim some link with Edinburgh University. Much of it is clever parody and witty satire by writers who are not indifferent to the laws of verse-making.

The remaining books under discussion leave little impression. *The Enchanted Lovers*, by Aimée Scott (Elkin Matthews), though it attains

to poignancy in places, is not well constructed, dramatically, and is too facile in language. We think she could do more concentrated and permanent work. *Love and Duty* by Ellen Gilbert Cook (Longman), while doubtless written in all sincerity, is marred by the use of conventional clichés. *The Fringes of Her Gown* by Agnes Laurie-Walker (Heffer, 3s. 6d.) lacks the restraint that steers emotional verse clear of the shoals of sentimentality.

BYRON ON THE STAGE

Byron's Birthday was kept this year with dramatic honours, and a play founded on the story of his life and death was produced on January 22nd, at the Lyric Theatre, in London. The author, Mrs. Alicia Ramsey, had taken careful pains to ensure strict accuracy in the narrative; so we had none of the absurdities and anachronisms that sometimes spoil historical productions. The piece, too, was magnificently staged, and well acted; and proved a great personal triumph for Mr. Esme Percy in the rôle of Byron himself. The spontaneous applause at the end of every act showed the interest and appreciation of the audience.

Byron's is a story that can never fail to interest. Here is a young nobleman, born and bred in the midst of a great and world-wide war, and yet denied by physical defect the pursuit of Arms, in which his ancestors had so greatly distinguished themselves. But the pen is ever mightier than the sword; and in a single day he takes all London by storm, and all England by conquest. At once he is the darling of Society and the idol of the World. Then in a moment the cup is dashed from his lips; he becomes an outcast and an exile; till the morning of redemption breaks, and he is carried in a burst of enthusiasm to be the leader of a forlorn hope, and to die in the land of his love. It is a story that thrills the heart; and, whether for Byron or against, none can deny the tremendous romance of his life and death.

The play always interested. Sometimes it gripped. It held the close attention of the audience to the last. And yet to some extent it failed; and at the end of a fortnight it was taken off. We wish to write encouragingly; for we would like to see the play, if possible, re-written and revived. So we cannot avoid pointing out some defects Is it possible that the author attempted to show too much? Byron, like Swinburne, suffers from the too-careful record of every trivial detail. Was it necessary, for example, to show Byron measuring his waist? One might as well show a present-day hero dropping a penny in the slot of an automatic weighing-machine. Such things happen; but they are hardly worth remembering or recording. A graver fault follows. The trivial side of Byron's life being so elaborated, the nobler and greater side was by comparison underestimated. "Surely," said a not unkindly critic, "there was more in the man than this."

There was indeed a great deal more. Byron was the liberator of Greece. He was the founder in England of the party that dominated

British politics till a century after his death. He understood and interpreted Napoleon and the Revolution better than any other Englishman of his age. His mark is stamped on the thought of the ages that follow him. Among foreign readers, of whatever race or tongue, he ranks with Shakespeare alone among our poets. But of Byron's greatness we saw nothing, till its untimely eclipse in the last scene or epilogue. The scene was laid too much in the atmosphere of the ball-room and the drawing-room. But Byron's spirit is too great for such confinement. He is the poet, if ever there was, of the Mountains and the Sea and the unfettered liberty of Life.

The play deserved success, and we hope it may be re-constructed so as to win success. And we have kept to the last, what the author kept to the last,—all mention of the haunting beauty of that last scene or epilogue. There at length amends were made for any previous deficiency, as Byron himself made amends for any fault in life. Who that saw it can forget the anxious watchers by the bed, the storm at night, the nightingale's song, or the unconquerable spirit of the poet himself fretting the puny body to decay? That last scene, at least, deserves to live for ever.

BYRON IN FICTION

After the historical novel, the biographical novel. The hero again is Byron, but the volume is wisely published as fiction (*The Shattered Harp* by Howard Gordon Page. Alston Rivers 7s. 6d.), and considered simply as fiction, it is a wonderfully well told and well constructed tale. The story turns on the old love between Byron and Mary Chaworth. Between the lovers lay the impassable barrier of the blood of a murdered man. Eventually both married; and both unhappily. According to the author the old love was resumed, and a daughter Medora born of it; to be adopted after Mary's madness by the poet's sister, Augusta Ada Leigh. It might be so. We know it is a tradition in the Chaworth family that Byron the great lover "loved but once," and that Mary was the one true love of his whole life. It is admitted, too, that her husband, John Musters, treated her brutally. And at all events the theory is infinitely preferable to the horrible (and incredible) story put forth in *Astarte*. But as a matter of strict biography we are doubtful. According to Moore, Byron met Mary once only after her marriage; and the memory of that last meeting is preserved in the lines "Well! thou art happy."

> Away! away! my early dream
> Remembrance never must awake:
> Oh, where is Lethe's fabled stream?
> My foolish heart, be still, or break.

But considered simply as fiction, or as fiction that *might* be true, the author works out the theme with exquisite pathos and sympathy.

The story of Byron's own marriage follows on much the same lines

as in Mrs. Ramsey's play. We have Lady Heathcote's Ball and the Prince Regent; the attempted suicide of Lady Caroline Lamb, and the despairing ecstasy of other lovers. And after the marriage, the widening gulf between husband and wife. Fletcher's discovery of Mrs. Clermont with the private letters abstracted from the desk, admirably acted on the stage, is in the novel too. But in the novel Mrs. Clermont (depicted in the second of Byron's *Domestic Pieces*) becomes the female Iago of the plot. After a century perhaps we may be charitable. Mrs. Clermont was as faithful to Lady Byron as Fletcher to Byron himself. The melancholy fact remains that Byron, the Adonis adored of every woman, and with the whole world to choose from, made a most unfortunate choice. There is something wonderfully powerful in the love or attraction of opposites. And Byron's chivalrous nature was keenly sensitive to the attraction of his direct opposite, —as witness his admiration for Pope of all poets. But Byron and Lady Byron were as tragically unfitted as Byron and Pope, and separation was inevitable.

Laying the book down, or recalling the play, what is the effect on the mind? First of all a greatly increased respect for the memory of Mrs. Leigh, the poet's sister, the one woman in the world who thoroughly understood his infinite variety, and never failed in sympathy and help. And finally a wonder how it would have been had Byron's love for Mary been fulfilled in a marriage of true hearts.

We know what Byron himself felt :—

> Oh! had my fate been joined with thine,
> As once this pledge appeared a token.—

Fifteen years after her marriage and five years after the dissolution of his own, he wrote in his diary :—

> Our union would have healed feuds in which blood had been shed by our fathers; it would have joined lands broad and rich; it would have joined at least *one* heart, and two persons not ill-matched in years (she is two years my elder), and—and—and *what* has been the result?

Let us fancy it if we can. Byron a county magnate in Nottinghamshire and a chairman of the magistrates! Byron presiding over farmers' dinners and opening village flower-shows! Perish the thought! Surely the lesson is that Greatness in this world is never an easy thing to achieve; and that for men or women alike, whatever their station or wealth, what is best worth winning can only be won at the cost of pain and suffering and labour, and pangs as of child-birth. Let eugenists prove if they will from his genealogy that such a man as Byron ought never to have been born, nor his parents married. The fact remains that here we have one of God's miracles among mankind; and at the cost of untold and unimaginable suffering, a monumental greatness that nothing can efface.

D.R.F.

BYRON IN A PLAY AND A NOVEL

The Byron productions noted above provoked discussion which may culminate in a Byronic revival among the younger generation who will re-discover the hero of a century ago. The play admittedly had many faults, but it was harshly treated by the critics who deplore the vacuity of the modern stage and castigate its salaciousness. Such plays deserve to be reviewed instead of being hurried into oblivion. A second visit to "Byron" corrected some earlier impressions and showed that though the play was unfortunately named, suggesting that it presented Byron as a whole and not a one-sided view of him, it had a unity if one recognized that it concentrated on the tragedy of the poet's marital relations. We hear there is some hope of the play being materially strengthened and presented in New York and Berlin where the audiences may be more sympathetically interested in a grandiose literary figure, if the fundamental difficulty of presenting an overwhelming personality without giving the impression of being merely extravagant can be overcome. The novel is more balanced. Another POETRY REVIEWER wishes to add to Mr. Fotheringham's review the recommendation that those interested in matters Byronic should read *The Shattered Harp*, which deals in a new and sympathetic manner with one of the most discussed figures in the world of literature. This well-written, absorbing novel gives the reader a peculiar insight into the poet's nature, showing in a striking manner his dual personality—on the one hand his sardonic, cynical delight in shocking people—acting up to the part assigned to him by his "dear friends in London"—on the other his remarkable pride, nobility and truth. Byron hated slander and was unable to understand other people's malignity—"he would rather have died than have attacked in secret"—and was touchingly human at times, craving to be understood—"I want a little love, a little happiness at last. But it is no use. There is a curse over me from my birth!" A deft touch here and there shows at once the extremes of black and white in Byron's personality more vividly than all the flamboyant eulogies or denunciations could do. The book is divided into three parts or dramas—the first, his unfortunate love for his boyhood's ideal, Mary Chaworth; the second, his equally unhappy married life; and the third, commencing with the Eternal Pilgrimage, scorning to gloss over the depths to which he sank in Venice, working up through his life with Teresa Guiccioli whose "childish hands re-strung the harp once more," to the last heroic sacrifice for his beloved Greece—"The Call" he said—"The Call! O God, I thank Thee it has not come too late!" A book to hold the interest and exercise the imagination to the last line—and after!

The present theatrical season is notable for the entry of Mr Ernest Milton into management, strengthening the depleted ranks of actor-managers of capacity, character and resource. His imagination gave brilliance to an abstruse, bewildering Pirandello play which would have been found dull but for the author being fashionable and been

ranked as a failure but for Mr. Milton's marvellous acting of "The Mock Emperor," sane and mad. We hope that Mr. Milton will carry some of the poetry and insight and vigour of the Old Vic to the West End, where the strength and nobility of his genius should consolidate a powerful following especially if sustained by substantia plays. May his season at the Queen's be prolonged by a brilliant English play!

* * *

Because insufficient attention is given to-day to stage speech, as a rule, a special correspondent recently left the Rudolph Steiner Hall with a sense of elation, to think that, under Miss Edith Clements' tuition, so many young people are being shown, first, how to speak beautifully and then how fitly to suit the action to the word; and all by a method which seeks rather to evoke from within than to impose from without. Miss Clements explained that her aim is to have all speech and movement catch and render something of that "harmonious, semicosmic rhythm which sounds with deep, sweet meaning through all simple and natural life." In vitally expressed diction the vowel sounds must be purely spoken, to ring musically and to ring true—speech value resting on the "o" and the "i," for example, in "Kitty Alone"—while the whole piece must be ordered into a shape and pattern to which the accompanying physical movements naturally and thythmically conform, catching consciously the pitch, as well as the varying speeds, of the story that is being told. These theories were exemplified, in a series of items delightfully handled, by children and girls. The numbers included simple rhythms and motion patterns, to illustrate jingles and story poems, acted stories and ballads, phrasing and choral speaking.

* * *

Morwenstow Vicarage, in North Cornwall, was built and presented to the benefice, in 1837-8, by the famous parson-poet, R. S. Hawker, author of *Cornish Ballads*, and Vicar there from 1834 till his death in 1875. Here he wrote his poems, and here in 1848 he entertained Tennyson. Hawker modelled three of his chimneys on towers of Cornish churches he knew—Stratton, Whitstone, and North Tamerton. Two others are of Oxford origin—he was at Pembroke and (after his first marriage) at Magdalen Hall. The kitchen chimney represents his mother's tomb. His verse inscription is still over the door. Unfortunately, the house is too large for the present Vicar to keep up in these days of reduced clerical stipends, and, unless the income can be increased by £100 a year, it is to be sold. Last year the Vicarage was used as a tea-house. An appeal has been issued to save it, and help is sought from the hundreds of visitors, including many Americans, who every summer make pilgrimage to Morwenstow and its fine old church. The Hon. Treasurer is Mr. W. Waddon Martyn, Tonacombe Manor, Morwenstow, Cornwall.

THE HEART OF POETRY

IN the endeavour to be epigrammatic the author of *Jurgen* expressed but half a truth when he wrote "Poetry is man's rebellion against being what he is." Yet to express even half a truth on such a subject in the compass of a few words is no small achievement. To express the whole truth is and must ever remain an impossibility. As well hope to depict on the point of a needle the iridescent wonder of the peacock's flowing plumage. For poetry is man's attempt to attune himself to the rhythm of the Universe—which can be felt and measured for a little way but which extends to immeasurable space, encompassing distances so vast that the soul of man reels in the contemplation and no language offers words adequate to envision.

The surge of that cosmic rhythm beats through all true poetry, and therein lies the acid test which decrees a poem's immortality or eventual oblivion, sorting, inevitably, the true jewel from the base replica. Emerson declares:

> "The true poet is he who detaches himself from the world and who most lays himself open to receive the impulses of the Soul of Nature. Who, receiving them, transmits them most faithfully and most perfectly."

Poetry is the natural language of all the nobler emotions that stir the soul of man. Worship, reverence, love—whether it be love of man for woman or of patriot for his country, or that nobler love which embraces all mankind—inevitably lend to the words which would express them a rhythm and beauty which is strictly proportioned to the adequacy of that expression. Thus a hymn has ever been recognized as the most fitting form of worship, and every great religious book of the world is written in the language of poetry. Neither is there any alternative, for no one will ever greatly influence the world whose own soul is not in tune with the grand rhythm of the Eternal and who does not in some measure translate that rhythm for his fellows.

In strict measure as it achieves harmony with that rhythm lies the intrinsic worth of a poem—is, indeed, the validity of its claim to the title, the sign manual which raises it from the ranks of verse or of disrupted prose. No forced emotion masquerading in a fool's motley of chopped lines, nor platitude dressed in jingling rhyme will ever gain immortality. Substance and form are the genii of all true poetry whose twin strength is necessary ere the summit of the Mount Parnassus can be attained. Rarely, indeed, may that steep ascent be achieved by the aid of but one of these, and then only by him who is a giant in his own strength. One—perhaps two—there may have

been of that titan stature whose work will live, but the fate of the host of their lesser imitators is but mediocrity and oblivion. Well for these last to heed the warning of William Sharp :

> " To urge that a poem is great because of its high message is almost as uncritical as it would be obviously absurd to aver that a postman is illustrious because of some epic or history he may carry in his bag. In a word, the first essential concern of the artist must be with his vehicle. In the instance of a poet, this vehicle is language emotioned to the white heat of rhythm."

Rhythm ! In the presence or absence of this one essential, and not in any arbitrary arrangement of metre or rhyme, lies the distinction between prose and poetry. Paragraph and sentence may be as true poetic media as line and verse ; the prose poem may be imbued with as much of the Parnassian fire as the most polished arrangement of dactyl and spondee, may run with as true a rhythm and as metrical a lilt, for the poet is master of his form and not its servant, and the divine afflatus will colour and ennoble his every word.

Rhyme (so beautifully described by Oscar Wilde as " That exquisite echo which in the muse's hollow hill creates and answers its own voice ") and metre are not essentials for the poetic thought. They are but the materials wherewith the master craftsman may build a fitting temple for his muse, a shrine whose beauty shall induce man to enter, that perchance the message preached therein may fall on listening ears and hearts attuned to acceptance. Equally false to his goddess is he who offers but an empty, sounding vault, and he whose traitorous enervation erects an ill-conceived and shapeless edifice. Poor craftsmen they, who have not learned with Watts Dunton that :

> " By aid of sincerity and conscience the poet is enabled to see . . . with Sophocles that nothing, not even poetry itself, is of any worth to man . . . unless it is in the deepest sense good."

The poet is the muezzin who from his minaret calls the world to still its discordant clatter for a moment and to listen that, perhaps, some faint echo of the song of the spheres in their wheeling courses may reach the ear of mankind. Whether his message be cast in sonorous prose or in flowing verse, only the deep, clear note of sincerity will ever penetrate the hubbub of the bazaar and the market-place. All others may be lost in the roar of the traffic, but that one tone rings with a sweet dominance that searches every corner and perforce compels the hearer to cast an upward glance in search of its source.

It is this impelling power which caused a Russian author, P. D. Ouspensky, to write : " Undoubtedly each thought of a poet contains

enormous potential force, like the power in a piece of coal or in a living cell, but infinitely more subtle, imponderable and potent."

It is in the minaret that the true station of the poet is found, where his vision may range unobscured by the smoke of commerce, and his ear, undimmed by the foolish clamour of the streets, may listen for the message of the stars. Not for him the floor of the mosque below and the petty wrangling of the "two-and-seventy creeds," for, as W. Warde Fowler, "The true poet is never a preacher except in so far as he is a poet."

In this lies the immortality of the great poets, and it is for this reason that the Pagan Homer, the Mohammedan Sa'di and the Christian Shakespeare alike find an echo in the hearts of men of all times and of all creeds. Not for them the shallow didacticism which says, "Lo, I see a vision and this is the true and the only interpretation thereof." The gift of vision that is the poet's brings with it a duty and a responsibility which there is no evading, but that duty lies in the faithful transmission of the vision that it may lie clear to all men unmarred and unnarrowed, that each may read therein his own lesson. For the true poet knows, with Hamilton W. Mabie (*Short Studies in Literature*), that "This is the story of every master-piece of the first class. Something greater and deeper discloses itself in the work than the artist himself was conscious of; it is one of the deep and suggestive facts of life that men are continually building better than they know."

D. McN. LOWE.

HOMO SAPIENS

WHEN *Homo Sapiens* at first was young and green
He hesitated not to lift the gauze
That ever hangs behind the veil of Cause;
But older grown, and with a logic keen,
He now adopts an inferential mein,
And, from Invariable Sequence draws
Conclusions which he designates as Laws,
And sees in Nature but a vast machine.

And yet, since Nature's dematerialized,
Space, Time, and Motion but a way of thought,
Should he not deem it time he realized
The flimsy mental fabric he has wrought,
And lift once more the veil that blocks his seeing
Just where he lives, and moves, and has his being?

JAMES A. TYNG.

POELCAPPELLE

(A Reminiscence)

All that dread night, twelve dreary hours that eked
An eternity out, each hour a groaning rung
Of involution, letting us down to the deeps
Of a wild hell, all that dread night we waited,
Huddled together like sheep, for zero hour,
Fearful of its approach, yet longing to know
It come that we might get over the attack,
And find resumption of the road this side
The gaping grave or the nether side of it.
The spirit shuddered at the uncertainty,
Till the sharing of the rum, three spoonsfull to a man
To drown the desperate despair, signalled drab dawn
Slouching over an east cut into everywhere
By skeleton-houses where once the Flemish women
Busied themselves to get hot coffee and rolls
For farming husbands ere they took the field
Whistling as they loosed the ploughing, steaming teams.

The crepuscular sky was heavy with the omen
Of rain, and over the waste of mud and corpses
Exuding a nauseous stench, a stillness brooded,
Intolerable stillness in that we knew our guns,
Batteries of them, preparing at that moment
To desecrate it with hoarse, thundering threnodies.

The barrage fell suddenly like a roaring hail;
A snarling lunacy of hideous lament,
Terrific booming mingling with the hiss
Of innumerable shells, and we moved forward;
The sharp rum tingling in our veins, our brains
Crapulent, our eyes viewing the churned-up field
As one last stage whereon life's swealing candle
Would flare for a moment before extinction.

We passed
The sunken road, exploring bullets of machine-guns
Taking their toll, till fifteen dwindled to six,
With Rigsby fallen, Rigsby who loved to talk
Of Mary his wife and all his seven children
Waiting for him in their sweet Yorkshire home.
Hepburn, who read a letter from his girl
Only a day before to me, a letter with plans
For their joint future when the war was over;
I left behind an inert mass bespattered
With dun mud, the lover lost to his love
In this life, anyway.

The drizzle dropped
With a coquettish fondling, soaking us to the skin;
Water and perspiration mixing to rouse
The sleeping fleas : but there was no time to give
Them any thought as they crawled about us, maddened.
Through the shrouding mist of rain and smoke we squelched,
Damning the lords of politics and war
Who brought us to this Babel of bawling cannon,
This Sodom and Gomorrah of stark-naked death,
Until we gained our first objective, baulked
To any further advance by the rattling whine
Of machine-gun bullets. There we stood, in water
Up to our waists, the shell-hole a huge one,
In company with a dead Bosche who knelt against
The parapet with his rifle to his shoulder,
Shocked into death by a detonating shell,
Until the first welter of confounding sounds
Subsided. Then Bill said : " Wot a 'ell of a loife ! "
Jim's " Christ ! "—exploding the word as though he hated it—
Filled me with apprehension so I hummed
" The Maid of Armentières " and " Tipperary "
To scare away the terror of the minute.
We fell to a queer quiet for a short while;
Our etiolated faces contorted into strange
And funny grimaces, while our spirits prayed
For the avenging maw of death to take us in
And end this futile fury of foaming wrath
Man-moulded steel proclaimed.

The attack calmed down;
When through the gas-laden hush floated the cries
Of the dying, one screeching in a frenzied rage
For water, with water everywhere around
Trickling from heaven ; another calling on God,
His skull scalped as an Indian scalps a white man,
Shrieking odiously to the grey-dripping sky ;
And yet another with abominable burst
Of blasphemy asking the devil to witness God.
There through the delaying hours we stood, cracking
False jokes, while from the masking hills rolled up
Ponderous artillery to their new positions.

All that night through the implacable drizzle dropped
And the wind whinnied over the scaring acres
Of mud where murdered men sprawled battered limbs ;
Where living men were dazed by a live noise of fright
Stalking abroad.

When the light crept down on us,
Stealthily as with a bitten conscience, arrived
The message to be taken through the line,
Each Company Commander to peruse it.
Our Captain held it in his shaking hand
Untemptingly before us three, and I—
Well, volunteered—who would not ?—glad enough
For action that would break my mind's lethargy,
Would bring the blood galloping through its veins once more.

And all that day, my head a clotted mass
Of hair, the steel-helmet weighing down on it
Awry, I hastened warily from hole
To hole, seeking whatever burrow would give
A further lease on life if but for a second,
(For a whole life then crowded a second's space)
The excited snipers potting at my body
Making vermicular motions as it wormed
Over and sometimes into the boggy mire,
Now crouching to avoid the showering fount
Of drizzle, shrapnel, clods of soiling glebe,
Now throwing itself prone into a sheltering hole
As the rat-tat-tat warned of metal emissaries.

Each Company Commander read the message. . . .

And six months later when the General pinned
The medal to my breast before a mass-parade
I thought of Rigsby grovelling in the mud,
Of Hepburn dying without a word that morning.

ALFRED H. MENDES.

The first recognition of The Poetry Society having entered its twenty-first year came from the Countess Van Bylandt who telegraphed " Best Wishes " from the Hague on February 25.

Particulars of the Minshall Challenge Cup for the Reading and Speaking of poetry in a foreign language will be found on p. 82. Members are reminded that the Competition for the Rawnsley Memorial Medal will be held in the autumn. Centres are requested to provide entries.

The Caldecott Community, of Goff's Oak, near Cheshunt, in their play *King Saul*, at the Rudolf Steiner Hall, gave an extraordinarily refreshing and competent performance, by players under fourteen years old. The members of this Community enjoy life as much as they obviously enjoy acting ; they are children of all ages who come from homes with abnormal conditions to this delightful school with its rare spirit of "freedom of body and mind."

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Many of those who enter for the monthly premium have a common fault,—they do not carry out enough careful revision and ruthless deletion. Laboured verse can only be poetry by a miracle, but that type of writing which has come to be called "facile" needs a generous allowance of divine fire to make it of any lasting value. The three poems which share the premium this month are from A. W. Uloth, E. J. Harrison, and A. D. L. Wilson, and are distinctive, respectively, for their polished dignity, sympathetic observation, and lyrical sincerity. Though not by any means faultless, these poems contain more careful and original writing than any others received for this competition, and are good in both content and craft.

Without any prejudice whatever, we should like to make a few remarks with regard to certain of the less successful contributors. In the first place, there is this month a deplorable similarity in many entries to the weaker brethren in Hymns Ancient and Modern, pedestrian in metre and expression; there are also several rhymes which cause us anxiety—to quote for instance from one contributor alone: "Roman . . . no man" "Orange-gold . . . . my mac old" (This venerable garment, incidentally, was surrounded with webs "span" by spiders.) "Circling seas . . . . come to tease" and so on. This same gentleman also supplies us with a supreme example of an emergency line. Faced with the difficulty of finding a rhyme for "while" and "smile," he writes, "And now can I you beguile."

This type of verse should be scrupulously avoided, as it gives an instant impression of prolonged pencil mastication, and of a mind tortured by endless experiments.

We should also like our members (1) to avoid saying what has been said much too often before; *e.g.*, of the moon

"Sometimes above the field you lie,
A shining sickle in the sky."

(*cp.* Hymns Ancient and Modern, No. 381

"And the silver moon by night
Shining with her gentle light."

We should also be interested, by the way, to have some explanation of an allusion in the last two lines of this poem:

"Or sailed upon your (the moon's) silver sea,
To catch the golden fishes three.")

(2) To avoid being carried away on an overwhelming tide of sentimentality. The examples of this are too many, and the task of selection too difficult to allow us to quote a representative line.

(3) To avoid writing awkward lines for the sake of a convenient rhyme, *e.g.*, "past . . . . faster and more fast." (This fault nearly spoilt one of the premium poems.)

(4) To cease wallowing in the luxurious bath of self-pity, and suffering "perfect pangs"—this is described aptly but unwittingly

by another contributor as " gaily sighing "—and being so deliciously unhappy that the " tears drop steadily and slow."

(5) To avoid imitating the works of other and greater poets in general, and the ballads and sterner compositions of Mr. Masefield in particular :

" I will go down to the sea in a ship "

" . . . . the vogue
I'll set : I'll string 'em up, the rascals damned."

(6) To avoid unconscious humour. This can only be eradicated by most careful and critical revision. We quote three examples from the poems under consideration. One contributor, hoping to escape from " earthly stress and *dole* " gives us the impression that she is pessimistically expecting the gallows, and " that awful drop ", coupled with " the horror of that fall ", while another, after describing, with great enthusiasm her adventures under the influence of The Ether Mask, is caught back by Life, through no fault of her own, and wakes to " *sick* reality ".

These points, therefore, triteness, excess of sentiment, awkwardness, despondency, imitation, and unfortunate " doubles entendres ", tend to spoil what is otherwise, in almost every case, very readable verse. But those poems are not poetry, that are, like the curate's egg, only good in parts.

Highly Commended.	*Commended.*
E. Alcock,	E. F. Alden,
A. C. Braund,	N. Allport,
S. Dobson,	J. W. Anderson,
A. G. Eddison,	V. I. Arlett,
F. Kemp,	K. O'Neill Bailey,
E. M. Mason,	A. Berridge,
M. Ormiston,	M. Boon,
J. Purdie,	E. Collinge,
M. Rees,	N. K. Cruikshank,
P. Rimmer,	M. R. Dowson,
M. Rowland,	G. W. Eustace,
A. J. G. Russell,	G. W. Lacey,
E. Samms,	I. Oldershaw,
M. Toovey,	D. Osborne,
I. Trimble,	I. Ormsby,
D. H. Verder,	M. Oughton,
E. Walker,	M. Pollard,
M. A. Woodward.	D. Scoloudi,
E. B. Parker,	W. Williams,
N. Pollok.	W. Wraith.

In answer to correspondents, we wish to make it clear that

(*a*) Poems that do not gain the premium one month may be entered a second time ;

(*b*) Poems entered for the premium, if unsuccessful, may be entered afterwards for any other special competition announced in THE POETRY REVIEW;

(*c*) Poems entered for other special competitions, if unsuccessful, may afterwards be entered for the monthly premium.

We are glad to note that there have been no poems this month which have not borne the author's name and address, but we wish to stress the rule that *entries must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope, or they will not be considered.*

A pertinent comment comes from Mr. Eustace, who suggests, "if it be necessary to find a definition for Poetry, Coleridge's simple Elizabethan, 'The best words in their best order,' in substitution for the modern skyscrapers enumerated on p. 79 of the 'P.R.', and that the whole of these new thirty-nine articles be further elevated by the insertion under them of a double charge of American Dynamics, and if *But Plato*, p. 42, is not intended as a half-parody of E. B. Browning's immortal lines,

'Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,'

it throws doubt on the correctness of Ker's teaching with reference to the relation of diction to verse pattern, viz., 'Using the sonnet form, one must use noble language.' In any case, it would seem to be desirable for the 'P.S.' to adopt the Merchandise Marks Act so that obvious 'liftings' when exhibited in the windows of the 'P.R.' may be appropriately labelled."

* * *

Mr. W. K. Lewis again encourages his colleagues of The Poets' Fellowship by offering another premium of three guineas, this time for lyrics suitable for a musical setting. We hope to associate with this competition a distinguished composer who will undertake to set to music and secure the publication of one or more lyrics submitted, and any additional fee forthcoming will be added to the three guineas provided by Mr. Lewis. MSS. must be addressed to "The Lewis Premium, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 16 Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.1." not later than March 25th.

* * *

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," the Poets' Fellowship, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, before April 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, or international coupon, and, if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. should be sent.)

AN APOLOGY TO THE POETRY SOCIETY

Following on the reference on p. 450 of the November–December issue of the POETRY REVIEW to a leaflet purporting to emanate from a new concern styled "The Poetry Lovers' Fellowship," we have to state that the appended apology has been received from the promoter of that "fellowship" and duly published in *The Times*, *Morning Post*, *Spectator*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Sheffield Telegraph* and *Yorkshire Post*. We leave readers to gauge the desirability, worthiness and sincerity of an imitative body based on and justified by the misrepresentations that are the subject of the apology, which we trust will finally put an end to a despicable campaign of calumny:

To the Executive Council of The Poetry Society (Incorporated), 16 Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.1.

On behalf of the "Poetry Lovers' Fellowship" and of myself and of my colleagues associated with it, I am authorised and requested to express sincere regret that statements to the prejudice of and affecting the good name of The Poetry Society and of certain individual members thereof, have been printed and published by, and on the letter-paper of "The Poetry Lovers' Fellowship," and to offer an unqualified apology, for, and withdrawal of, these statements.

Instructions have been given for the immediate destruction of all papers or documents which have been printed and remain unissued, containing the statements in question, and on behalf of the "Poetry Lovers' Fellowship" and of myself and my Colleagues thereof, I undertake to make no further attacks, either directly or indirectly, affecting The Poetry Society (Incorporated) or any of the members thereof.

I agree that as the statements in question (for which I am prepared to accept full responsibility) have been widely circulated amongst the members of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) as well as in many other quarters, The Poetry Society shall be at liberty to publish this apology in the newspapers; and I agree to contribute the sum of 25 guineas towards the cost of such publication, and to pay the costs of the Solicitors of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) in the matter.

Signed) Oliver C. de C. Ellis.

Witness to the Signature of Mr. Oliver C. de C. Ellis:

(Signed) W. BARWELL.

We regret to have to record the death of Captain Charles Foxcroft, who was for many years a Vice-President of the Poetry Society, taking an active interest in its activities and contributing lectures and readings to the Savoy Chapel, Kensington, and other general and centre meetings. Another colleague and one-time member of the General Council, Mrs. Alys Eyre Macklin, died on January 19th. A correspondent wrote of her in *The Times*:

"Possessed of more than common physical beauty combined with

charm of manner, she endeared herself to many friends in Newcastle, London, and Paris. At the age of seventeen she was a regular contributor to the newspapers, and through life her literary interests were extensive and varied. . . . In conversation her flow of ideas and subtle choice of their right expression were quite extraordinary. . . . Her many friends in the Lyceum Clubs of London and Paris, and elsewhere, will remember gratefully her unwavering courage, her hopeful spirit, her breadth of outlook, and her generous friendship."

Miss Sybil Bristowe, Mrs. Macklin's successor as President of the poetry group of the Lyceum Club, which was added to that organisation's many " circles " on the suggestion of the Director of the Poetry Society, following on a complimentary dinner to the Society—one of this active Club's many hospitalities—contributes the following tribute:

Beauty and graciousness were hers !
  Death knocked, and memory
Alone remains
  Of all her friendship, generous sympathy.

Tender she was, and holding high regard
  For worth in others ever spurring on
Youth to the heights
  Where glory waited, victories might be won.

Death has small power to kill !
  The gifts she strewed with bountiful largesse
Are with us still
  And influence limitless.

Shall not remembrance feel the breath
  Of that most vital life which moved serene
(Conqueror alike of failure and success)
  The rocks between ?

Oh gallant spirit !
  Your passionate flame of courage lingers yet
Enriching, ardent !
  —The colours deepen, though the sun be set.

* * *

The capability of Miss Beatrice Rose as a teacher and director of young people was amply shown by the delightful and varied programme presented by " The Young Players " at the Rudolph Steiner Hall. The actors and actresses—for they deserved the name—were young. younger, and younger still, and yet showed considerable talent, and, above all, gave every appearance of enjoying themselves. Miss Rose, in a short speech, paid tribute to the keenness of her pupils in attending rehearsals ; the plays themselves paid tribute to Miss Rose.

SHAKESPEARE

GOD favoured England on that April day
When He leaned down and took within his hands
The perfect portion of her pliant clay,
Touched it to flame . . . behold, it glowing stands!

AGNES MacCARTHY HICKEY.

A POETS' CALENDAR

March

1. Rabelais, d. 1553.
2. Juvenal, b. 60.
3. Waller, b. 1605; Otway, b. 1651; William Davenant, b. 1605; G. Herbert, d. 1633.
6. E. B. Browning, b. 1809; Beaumont, d. 1616.
7. J. R. Green, d. 1883.
8. William Roscoe, b. 1753.
9. William Warner, d. 1609.
10. John Denham, d. 1669.
11. Tasso, b. 1544.
12. Bishop Berkeley, b. 1684.
13. Boileau, d. 1711.
14. Klopstock, d. 1803; A. O'Shaughnessy, b. 1844.
17. Massinger, d. 1640.
18. Sterne, d. 1768.
19. W. Allingham, b. 1828.
20. Ibsen, b. 1828; Ovid, b. B.C. 43.
21. Southey, d. 1843.
22. Goethe, d. 1832.
23. La Place, b. 1749.
24. Longfellow, d. 1882; William Morris, b. 1834.
25. James Payn, d. 1898.
26. Vanbrugh, d. 1726.
27. de Vigny, b. 1797.
28. R. C. Trench, d. 1886.
29. Keble, d. 1866.
30. Sir H. Wotton, b. 1568.
31. E. Fitzgerald, b. 1809; Donne, d. 1631.

April

2. Hans Andersen, b. 1805.
3. Herbert, b. 1593.
4. Goldsmith, d. 1774.
5. Swinburne, b. 1837.
6. Rousseau, b. 1669.
7. Wordsworth, b. 1770.
9. Bacon, d. 1626.
10. Rossetti, d. 1882; Swinburne, d. 1909.
11. Christopher Smart, b. 1722.
12. Edward Young, d. 1765.
13. La Fontaine, d. 1695.
14. Otway, d. 1685.
15. Matthew Arnold, d. 1888.
16. Aphra Behn, d. 1689.
18. Erasmus Darwin, d. 1802.
19. Byron, d. 1824.
21. Mallet, d. 1765.
22. James Grahame, b. 1765.
23. Wordsworth, d. 1850; Shakespeare, b. 1564, d. 1616.
24. Defoe, d. 1731.
25. Cowper, d. 1800; Tasso, d. 1595.
26. Racine, d. 1699.
27. Gibbon, b. 1737.
28. Cotton, b. 1630.
29. Cleveland, d. 1659.
30. Montgomery, d. 1854.

THE DEFINITION OF POETRY

TO read, hear and write poetry are the pleasantest ways to make discoveries about poetry, and the most fruitful in results. Precise descriptions are dull, and, though they may clarify the intuitive knowledge gained in this natural manner, they cannot take its place. Besides, poetry is peculiarly hard to define in logical terms, because it has two sides which cannot be separated, and yet are important and very real. A poem can be heard, but it is not the sound of spoken words ; it can be sung, but it is not the sound of musical notes ; it can be read in silent solitude, and yet it is not the sight of print. Consequently, attempts to comprehend the whole nature of poetry in one definition, although they have been numerous, have always been unsuccessful. Most of them, however true and beautiful they have been, have exhibited one of the attributes of poetry especially dear to an individual rather than drawing a sharp line, a line commending itself to general acceptance, between works of literary art which are poems and works of literary art which are not poems, or between poetry and the other arts. Such are Milton's " Poetry is simple, sensuous and passionate," and Wordsworth's " Poetry is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science."

We speak sometimes of the music of poetry, and of the poetry of architecture, and we may say of a prose work that it contains poetry, or is touched with poetic feeling. In so doing, we are using the word in a loose sense ; such expressions may not impair, but do not improve, our notions of poetry.

Dr. Johnson's definition of poetry as metrical composition is characteristic of its author. But some words metrically arranged fail to attain to the dignity and status of poetry. Equally characteristic is Shelley's definition— " Poetry in a general sense may be defined as the expression of the imagination." But some literary works of high imaginative quality are not poems in the formal sense. It appears, therefore, that the question is partly one of degree. On the one hand, metrical words must reach a certain pitch of formal excellence before they become poetry ; and, on

the other hand, imagination must work with a certain intensity before it can transform words into poetry.

Accordingly, we will offer two definitions, each em phasizing one aspect of poetry at the expense of the other, yet in other respects keeping as close as possible to one another. (*a*) Poetry is language set on fire by imagination ; (*b*) Poetry is imagination evoked by means of language. The point at which words are set on fire, or at which they rouse the reader's or hearer's imagination, can only be determined by the test of actual experience. It is the point where they become a charm or incantation, so that, instead of merely conveying information about the writer's feelings and ideas, they seize upon the spirit of author, reader or hearer, stimulating it to work by its own latent energy, and allowing the imagination to secure a temporary authority over the other mental powers.

A poem consists of words ; a poet is one who employs words with more than ordinary skill. Words are his only instruments, and the sole materials with which he can build and adorn his rhythm, to convey his imagery and emotions. Supposing such a thing to be possible, it would be of no poetic use to have an inspired vision which remained in that state and did not objectify itself in words ; such a vision would not be a poem, and the possession of it would not make a poet.

Yet a poem does not consist of words, for the words can be heard or read without exciting the proper response. The reader and hearer have to respond to their influence, before the poem is re-created in them. A poem is a passionate mental experience ; and, though the poet is a master of language, his spoken words and written symbols are nothing but instructions issued by him, which, if obeyed, will revive the poem, but, if disregarded, remain dead.

So far we have established little difference between the poet and his reader (or hearer). If a perfect poem were ever written, in which a poet should enshrine the whole of his intense imaginative experience, so that in his head there did not hover any feeling or thought which he did not succeed in digesting into words, and if such a poem were

read by a reader whose mood was properly attuned, who felt the influence of the rhythm, rhymes and other formal qualities of the verse with the same force as their author when he conceived them, who beheld the same vision, and who experienced in reading the same kind and degree of pleasure as did their creator when he first knew that his efforts had been crowned with success—if all these conditions were fulfilled, the poem would be the same for author and reader. But these conditions are never completely fulfilled. Poetry always falls short of perfection, both in creation and in revival.

The remarkable difference between poets and other men does not lie in the poem. To appreciate a poem to the full would not make the reader a poet. There is in the poet a motive force, an urge, a primal energy, which enables or compels him to produce—call it inspiration, originality, or by any other name; and it is this, existing in germ in his temperament, developed through life by circumstances or deliberate effort or both, evoked by happy accident or by design, that makes him a poet. A poet is born, not made.

But every finished poet is made, as well as born. His mother tongue is a convention which he has to learn, before he can innovate upon it. English poetry possesses traditional metres, discovered rhymes, conventional habits of diction, which change quickly or slowly. There are traditional ways of viewing life and its meaning, the world and the objects contained by it, ways that are incessantly improving or deteriorating. Poets learn these, whether they accept or reject them. Some of the most daring experimenters have been deeply versed in the traditional technique of poetry. Nothing of this knowledge comes to the poet by the light of nature, however strong be his primal impulse to produce poems. He has to master some part of the traditional technique, as other craftsmen practising other arts have to do. For him to disregard it entirely is to court failure.

A poem is an endeavour of the poet to crystallize and communicate his state of mind at a certain moment. He

does not address himself to the reason, nor to the memory, nor to the perception, nor to the feelings of his reader, but to all of them at once. He tears at the veils that keep our lives asunder; he aims at making the reader, for the time, one with himself; he tries to transfer his entire experience to the mind of the reader or hearer, by means of his words. In order to produce such an effect, he is obliged to bring together all the resources of words that he can command, and to use them simultaneously. He employs the seductions of rhythm, the suggestiveness and manifold associations of words, the beauty of word-imagery—all the graces and powers of language. Poetry, Samuel Daniel said, is "the perfection of speech"; a more exact expression of the idea would be that every poem is an attempt on the part of language to perfect itself.

To say that poetry is imagination evoked by means of language, and that it is language set on fire by imagination are understatements. A poem is entirely created by imagination. The fiction and the substantive images are more obviously, but not more actually, the fruit of imagination than the rhythm, the rhymes, the diction, and the poetic meaning of the words. All flow from the poet's mind as the natural expression of his experience.

There is considerable danger of ambiguity when imagination is discussed, for it is used in two senses. When Dryden said "Imaging is in itself the very height and life of poetry," he meant (*a*) That poetry consists of imagery; (*b*) that the power of creating images is a necessary part of the poet's spiritual equipment. The images themselves must be conceived as distinct from the energy which creates them.

The poet is tied to earth, and takes his strength from it; the material of which all his images are composed originates in information derived through his senses. Yet again, he soars above the earth, because he fuses his images to produce that which never was on sea or land. His substantive images are not mere copies of reality; they are his own, bearing the impress of his soul, being framed in part according to his desire. As Hazlitt said, "The imagination

is that faculty which represents objects, not as they are in themselves, but as they are moulded by other thoughts and feelings into an infinite variety of shapes and combinations of power."

But imagination is not the peculiar attribute of poetry. It is possessed by the mathematician, the statesman, and the engineer as strongly as by the poet; indeed, it is universal in creative work. Towns, the country side, bridges and roads, all human institutions, are alike the results of human imagination. All had to be imaged before they could be made, and all are different from the natural world, although constructed—except social institutions—from the materials of that natural world. At the present time many people have formed a vague image of the Channel tunnel, constructed on the analogy of their experience of existing tunnels and of the London tubes. The genius of the engineer will undoubtedly transcend all these experiences when the Channel tunnel is made, if that time ever comes. But his imagination will be limited by the laws that govern the physical world, by gravitation, the strength of the materials, the distance to be traversed, the efficiency of tools and tunnelling instruments, and so forth. It will be circumscribed by conditions imposed on him from without, and his imagery will take its form from the practical purpose that he has in mind.

The poet, on the other hand, is relatively free. He can, to a considerable extent, make his own conditions, and his power to do so is one of the principal measures of his genius. The artistic imagination, being subjective, can frame, fuse, and combine its imagery largely according to its desires. Therefore purpose is more prominent in practical imagination, and feeling in artistic imagination, both as determining the imagery and as being revived side by side with it in artistic experience. These are the principal distinctions between the two kinds of imagination.

As the poet satisfies himself by shaping his fancies according to his desire, and by means of his incantation makes his fiction credible, to the reader, who looks at the poem from the opposite end, as a finished product, it

appears, above all, as a vision transcending ordinary reality. Bacon, being a philosopher, regarded poetry in this way. "Poetry," he said, "gives some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, the world being in proportion inferior to the soul."

So far we have tried to elucidate the nature of poetry mainly by examining poems as they stand, and by considering the purpose for which they are written. In this way we have succeeded in almost avoiding the ideas of pleasure, beauty and emotion. Our last quotation, in the words "some shadow of satisfaction," brings us to those ideas, and to the motives which, beside impelling poets to write, determine the directions in which their imaginings shall run. It is well to keep away from these ideas as long as possible; for, as Miss Edith Sitwell has very properly said, "Poetry is primarily an art, and not a dumping ground for emotions." But emotion is present in poetic experience, and so in the end we are obliged to face them, unless we are to be content with a partial and incomplete conception of poetry.

Man is an active being; he incessantly tends to express himself. The generality of mankind do so by concrete action, in fighting, or a profession or trade. Some are under the necessity of working at mechanical tasks, and there are many others who have very little opportunity of self-expression in the material and social worlds. But all, even the most active, are under restraints, the restraints of custom and law, which are universal; or restraints due to work and circumstances. All desire to do much that they may not or cannot do, and the frustration of desire generates conflicting emotions.

Poetry affords an outlet for such suppressed and conflicting feelings, by allowing the creation of what accords for the moment with the wishes of the poet, both in the imagery and in the technique of the verse. It is one of the ways in which a fictional gratification can be substituted for an actual gratification that is out of reach, whereby comfort may be obtained.

The grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.

And it acts in this respect in the same manner for the reader as for the poet. The sense of relief and the very keen pleasure felt by the author are experienced by the reader in re-creating the same beauty, although neither explicitly formulates the motive. "Let us therefore," says Bishop Keble, "deem the glorious art of poetry a kind of medicine divinely bestowed upon man, which gives healing relief to secret mental emotion, yet without detriment to modest reserve."

"Modest reserve"—this brings us to our last point. The restraints imposed upon impulsive and antisocial action being innumerable, repression and the resulting conflict of feelings are habitual. They are also concealed and secret, and yet profound. Hence feeling, seeking satisfaction in a fiction, naturally fastens on rhythm, and on images connected with the foundations of the poet's soul—his earliest experiences and those objects which have made a lifelong impression on him. In consequence, poetry is intensely symbolic. "Poetry," wrote Poe, "belongs to that class of composition in which there lies, beneath the transparent upper current of meaning, an under or suggestive one." When the veil is thin, so that the inner meaning is seen through the symbols, the poem is frankly allegorical. Generally the veil is dark and thick, so that the meaning of the symbols cannot be directly expressed. But the emotional effort of the poem is not less great.

The direct expression of many ideas and feelings is impossible. Even prose and ordinary conversation, which are relatively incomplete modes of communication, are full of metaphor and simile. It is inevitable that the attempt to secure perfect expression for an intense experience should produce an indirect and symbolic result.

A poem is an energetic movement of the poet's soul, a secret of his heart, a mental event of importance to him, an aching pleasure, a vivid image, a singing picture, an

exalted mood; when written or spoken, it is an endeavour on his part to make the experience definite for himself, to perpetuate it, and to share it. When read, in the true sense of reading, it is a revival in the reader's mind of the poet's entire experience, affording similar pleasure, and producing a similar emotional effect. It is the expression in symbolic and metrical form of some masterful feeling the direct indulgence whereof is by some cause repressed and prevented.

J. HUBERT JAGGER.

LA PUCELLE DE DIEU

Orléans—May, 1429
Orléans—29th April, 1929

AS to Jeanne I say my prayer
In this distant English room,
She, I dream, is wandering where
Torches flare in Orléans' gloom:

And the shadows whisper, "Hush!"
As the twilight deeper falls,
"Forth again she rides to rush
The foe, unseen, beyond our walls."
But her steady voice replies
Silencing triumphant horn,
"I but seek the flowering bush
Which somewhere in Domremy flies
A fragrant banner to the skies;
France's Maid and Rouen's Witch
Would wander now to peel a switch
To lead my sheep across young corn
With happy lambs, December born,
If God this night will ransom me,
A peasant girl from history."

So I offer with my prayer
English daisies for her hair.

A. DORIS L. WILSON.

THE DEAD TITAN[1]

GEORGE MEREDITH was born in 1828. His grandfather was a tailor, the shop No. 73 High Street, Portsmouth. To attempt to understand—and without understanding there can be no true criticism—any famous man it is necessary to consider carefully the time in which he lived, and the fashions, both in garments and in ideas that then prevailed.

When Meredith arrived at the age of ten years—an age at which he would take most vividly outside impressions—the mode of ladies' dresses was the wide crinoline, the elaborate dressing of glossy hair, with sometimes a curl, called a kiss-lock, and thin satin slippers for the feet. Now clothes indicate far more than mere transient whims. I purposely spoke of ladies' clothes, meaning women who had not to earn their living. The crinoline implied that a well-born female was not expected to hurry through life, she could not run or jump, or scramble on to public conveyances. Her hairdressing involved a long time spent before the looking-glass, and a certain care in exposing such well-tended locks to wind or rain. All this was the stamp of the conviction that a lady was regarded as a fragile, tender creature—a being far removed from sordid toil; a conviction that she and her male companions drew breath in an opposite sphere to those occupied in trade. If this firm belief had not been shared by the toilers it would have been of little consequence, but we perceive from Meredith's work that it was accepted by all classes, and, by a strange anomaly, the very contradiction manifested in the French Revolution appears to have strengthened, rather than weakened, that ignoble belief. For we find in Meredith's novels, and this without any underlying sarcasm, that the reading of French novels, or the ineffectual toying with a paint-brush, was the extent of a well-born woman's occupation. The only time they show any real activity is when they are on horseback; and that proves my point because of necessity the crinoline was then discarded. That all persons who toiled, or were in the condition of slaves,

[1] *Collected Poem*, new edition (Constable); George Meredith (*English Men of Letters*) (Macmillan).

were accepted as part of a divine ordinance is proved by the recorded fact that when, in 1838 a wide-minded man, Lord Brougham, brought forward a resolution against negro slavery in Jamaica, it was immediately rejected; and one month later Mr. Gladstone is reported to have spoken with admitted ability on behalf—not of slaves—but for the planters who trafficked in this human merchandise.

It was in this atmosphere that young George Meredith began life; it was within these sharply divided camps, the Patrician and the Plebeian, that this intensely sensitive, proud boy found himself. We have to remember also, that we have grown accustomed to hear of men who commenced their careers as office boys, or errand lads, rising to wealth and being, in many cases, given a title; we have seen, on the other hand, hereditary noblemen opening shops, or becoming motor mechanics, and even descending to dance and mime upon the stage. But Meredith saw none of this levelling; to him and his contemporaries a shop was the terrible gulf between the aristocrat and the plebeian; it was a background of shame, and the shame was intensified when the shop was that of a tailor. Imagine this boy's feelings if his schoolfellows should jeer and call him Snip, or Scissors. You remember how Polly saw the reflected horror and disgust in Rose Jocelyn's face when she, Polly, said tailors were called "Snips." That it was an unworthy shame on Meredith's part does not prove it less intense. Therefore, as many another has done, he wove an unreal fantastic story about his birth, and, at a riper age, even went so far as to falsify his returns on a census paper.

Then later, in an amazing contradiction of this secrecy, he wrote *Evan Harrington* in which all his relatives are portrayed, and the abhorred "shop" looms over the whole. It is the revolt of the Comic Spirit hurling down and trampling upon the notions engendered by Snobbishness.

It is this underlying contradictory bias of the man that has to be kept in mind. For here is an author who, in writing prose, constantly penned passages of purest poetry; but who, in writing poems, could include lines of the sheerest, ugliest prose.

Now, happily, or unhappily, we cannot treat of Meredith as a poet alone; we are bound to include his novels, because he inextricably united the two. He may be said to have mentally resided on an elevation from whence he observed a world—not altogether real, for he discerned the rich and idle far more distinctly than the masses—and in his isolation the acute sense of the comic ruled his intellect. And to him the Comic Spirit signified balance, the sword of Common-sense, the mirror on which Reason pointed out with firm unfaltering finger the impulses of the moving reflections. Therefore it is the more difficult to grasp—as an integral—the apparently antithetical processes of his writings. For instance, anyone attempting to reduce to a plain sum the money that the terrible Roy Richmond squandered will find himself lost in confusion; with Meredith thousands of pounds become as trivial as a half-crown piece; he revels in millions, showering gold upon his hero as Zeus dowered Danæ. But the moment he takes up his pen for poetry he becomes as loudly abhorrent of money as ever St. Francis of Assisi was meekly deprecative of it. So that we find that in almost all his novels wealth acts as the main-spring; his chief characters display the ease and the idleness that can be achieved only by the possession of a colossal banking account, but that his poetic muse continually brands wealth as a curse, and gold as destructive to the spiritual qualities of its possessor.

In *The Empty Purse*, he writes :—

> "Lord of the Purse! Behold him climb,
> Stalked ever such figure of fun
> For Monarth in great-grin pantomime?
> See now the heart dwindle, the frame distend;
> The soul to its anchorite cavern retreat,
> From a life that reeks of the rotten end."

and later he calls on men :—

> "To be man—clean rescued from beast;
> From the grip of the sorcerer; gold,
> Celestially released."

And again, in *Aneurin's Harp*, he cries :—

England her distended middle,
Thumps with pride as Mammon's wife;
O my Bard! a yellow liquor
Like to that we quaffed of old.
Gold is her metheglin beaker
She destruction drinks in gold.

These last lines, by the way, Walter Jerrold understood as being directed against drunkenness, which seems to be an error, for Meredith was clearly writing in hatred and scorn of wealth, Mammon, gold—this gold, which with his artist's eye, he likens to metheglin, a liquor of honey and water; for he is always the artist, even in his most complicated and seemingly ugly pictures. Attitude, form, colour, he sees and compares them unerringly.

It is tempting to contrast him with Thomas Hardy. Hardy was never able to envision life from the view-point of the opulent, the successful, the fashionable. We know now that he tried at one time to write of society persons and failed. Meredith, on the other hand, seldom entered, in his novels, into homely scenes, or felt the tragedy of frustrated lives unless they were decorative, he liked his characters to move in a scene of broad parks and lordly mansions. "Jude the Obscure" and "Richard Feverel" live in worlds miles apart the one from the other.

It has been said of Meredith "that he brought to fiction a mind at once highly poetical and deeply philosophical and critical." There can be no doubt but that he brought to his poems the same philosophical and critical sense. He never permits personal emotion to intrude; even in the verses most nearly related to his own painful or pleasurable experience the critical and the philosophical sense cuts away inexorably all play on the emotions. This has been felt by some critics to be a grave fault; if he had felt more deeply, they say, he would have written finer poetry; but there is no evidence that he did not suffer or enjoy as keenly as any other man. The fact is that his emotions were always subsidiary to, and kept under control by, his analytical spirit: his sense of balance. For instance, Shelley identified himself in his poems on Nature. In the "Ode

to the West Wind" he concludes his lovely singing with the cry, "I fall upon the thorns of life . . . I bleed," whereas Meredith with a calm heart apostrophises the wind but in no way connects himself with the strong breath of heaven. An innumerable host of poets play at this kind of hide-and-seek game with Nature, chasing, not her, but their own hearts through forests and in and out of sunlight and shadow. Meredith had too keen an appreciation of relativity to do this. He stood aloof, weighing, judging, comparing and even scorning; he took, as it were, notes, his mind, and not his heart, in the ascendant.

It may be that this remote attitude of his gives rise in us to a certain chagrin or disappointment, for it is always easier to appreciate an affinity, or likeness to ourselves in the words of a poet than to have to strive to discover a truth we have not yet realized.

The banal fecundity that produces, "Laugh and the world laughs with you, Weep, and you weep alone," gives us no new birth, and requires no concentration of mind to comprehend. It is merely the worn out coin of a well-used currency. Meredith holds out no pleasing platitudes in his poems any more than he does in his prose.

Mr. Priestley, in his volume in the series of *English Men of Letters*, affirms that he cannot accept Meredith's poetry on the whole; that "Meredith was a poet only on very rare occasions," and that "his words are not sufficiently charged with emotion." But is it incumbent on one to avoid a wine-merchant because he does not supply beef and mutton? Meredith was not a man who displayed emotion, or dwelt upon his feelings.

Throughout his life he showed a certain hardness, even harshness; as when he refused to see his dying runaway wife, and would not permit her to be visited even by her own son, for whom she petitioned. It is evident that he distrusted emotion. This is not to declare that he did not feel deeply; there can be no doubt that he did, and perhaps the more deeply because he allowed h mself no lament in words. When his heart was sorely wrung by the death of his second wife, and he wrote "A Faith on Trial" he cried

that although "flesh into spirit must grow, spirit cares not for a goal," it is "Reason herself, tip-toe at the ultimate bound of her wit." Here is his touchstone, Reason, not feeling, or emotion. It was argued in *The Times Literary Supplement* that "The thoughts which have no emotional field are by nature alien to poetry." This dictum appears contradicted in Meredith's verse, for his thoughts rise from the field of his Reason, and the sensations of Reason are hard as marble is hard, and we do not associate them with the usual acceptation of the word emotion. If we imagine Meredith writing an "In Memoriam" we see immediately how widely his attitude would have differed from that taken by Tennyson, for Tennyson wrote in what might be described as a transported orgy in Grief. Meredith would have stood stoically aloof from his own sufferings, weighing each word; summoning, as it were, the sorrows of all human hearts before him; whilst his acute sense of the need of perfect Balance—without which Tragedy dips the scale to Comedy—would have rejected all personal moaning. Owing, it may be, to this exclusion of the mere feelings, Meredith is at his highest in his poems on Nature, he sees her as Priestley says, with an honest mind and in pure daylight. And again, where he conveys a high and dignified thought he gives us, as it were, a ray as of the lightning itself. Witness his lines on man as architect or builder :—

> "He builds the soaring spires,
> That sing his soul in stone."

In this you hear the very note of the chisel on the stone, and catch sight of the soaring soul.

The final reason why we do not perhaps gain entire or absolute joy and satisfaction from his poems lies in the lack in Meredith's mind of any faith save that in man's own exertions. He leads us over Earth most valiantly with Reason, tip-toe at her ultimate bound, but at the finish we find ourselves faced with the gulf across which he had no bridge. He might be able to satisfy himself at the approach of death by asking :

" Into the breast that gives the rose
Shall I with shuddering fall ? "

but one could logically retort that the same breast harbours worms, and state without question :—

Into the breast that holds the worm
Shall I with shuddering fall.

The Nemesis of all writers who place their final contentment in the progress of thought, is, that we do not find them final. The sanest philanthropy inevitably ends at a gap where we are fain to cry out an agonised " Why ? "

But conceded that Meredith brings us to his gulf and no further, he could and did give us much that is of infinite value. He was one of those men who " shall uplift their earth." His nature poems are, for the most part, perfect, and he rose to gigantic stature in his splendid sonnet on Lucifer. This last four lines are as imperishable as anything in poetry.

He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

Milton's Lucifer cries out of the profundity of his desolation,

" O then at last relent, is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left ? "

The fallen Spirit appeals to the Spirit of God, but Meredith conceived of him as defeated by brain—" the stars—which are the brain of heaven," or the great law which can only be recognized and acknowledged by Reason. Then in the Hymn to Colour, he merits Theodore Maynard's line, he is " strong as the sun, and clean as dew." This stanza is musically grand in its simplicity of truth.

Look now where Colour, the soul's bridegroom, makes
The house of heaven splendid for the bride.
To him as leaps a fountain she awakes,
In knotting arms, yet boundless ; him beside,
She holds the flower to heaven, and by his power
Brings heaven to the flower.

It must be conceded that Meredith's verse is no easy relaxation for an hour of idleness, neither are his novels, the mind must be alert and robust that would enjoy his poems ; but the measure of poetic output is not contained in the ease with which it is read, nor in the quickness with which it can be retained in the memory. Meredith's prose works demand concentration and leisure to master, and Henley said that " his verse has all the faults and only some of the merits of his prose." But this expressed impatience is not wholly to be justified. Meredith shows himself as turgid and over-exuberant at times, because he was as a man secretly enjoying a satiric jest which he was careless of the reader's perceiving, unless such reader had a wit as keen as his own. His sense of the paramount importance of the comic situation led him astray from the path of true art occasionally ; as when, in *Richard Feverel*, he causes the simple old nurse to kiss the be-whiskered nobleman, whom she mistakes for Richard ; the incident is merely an obstruction to seeing the entire picture and is not, therefore, laughable. In his verse also, he commits this blunder occasionally—as when he wrote :

" Ladies who in chains of wedlock
Chafe at an unequal joke,
Not to nightingales give hearing ;
Better this, the raven's croak."

This may have made Meredith smile, but almost causes us to weep, it is so hideously unbearable.

It cannot be disputed that his finest novel would have been greater if he had subjected it to the pruning that an unfailing sense of Form would have exercised, this holds good of his poems also ; their faults are reflections from his personality. For, personally, he possessed an astonishing vitality, he could, and would, talk for hours, so also, in his work he literally pours out his impressions. In the poem, " A Lark Ascending," he has eighty-four lines rushing on without one full stop ; he writes as if he must himself emulate the " silver chain of sound, of many links without a break, In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake," of the little

feathered songster. It is this exuberance that defeats his object, these serried armies of words become soldiers in mutiny; and a doubt arrives in our minds as to whether their General can control them. His work is as a river in flood time, which, although its waters are fresh and healthful, rushes with so impetuous a current that we shrink from facing it. Yet how strong it can be we realize in his lines on Napoleon :—

> Cannon his name,
> Cannon, his voice, he came.
> Who heard of him, heard shaken hills,
> An earth at quake, to quiet stamped;
> Who looked on him beheld the will of wills,
> The driver of wild flocks where lions ramped.

And how gentle, in sheltered nooks, this torrent can be, as in "Love in the Valley" :—

> Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose,
> Jasmine winds the porch with stars two and three.
> Parted is the window; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
> Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.

But again, in this tender, half-playful poem, Meredith could insert what can only be described as a parish-magazine line, "She is forth to cheer a neighbour lacking mirth." We are left in ignorance as to whether the neighbour was moved to mirth, but we despairingly realize that we are not. Nevertheless, in power and beauty, Meredith could catch at a glance the peculiar and personal elements of former poets; this is proclaimed by his eight four-line pieces on Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley, Wordsworth and Keats. Especially penetrating are those on Milton and Spenser. On Spenser, commencing :—"Lakes where the sunsheen is mystic with splendour and softness." On Milton, concluding :—"The mystical harmonies chiming for ever throughout the bright spheres." In these lines Meredith depicts without effort, or strain, the poets themselves :—"Lakes where the sunsheen is mystic" *is* Spenser; the word *sunsheen* for sunshine strikes the actual "ringing cymbals" of Spenser's gentle

genius; as, "the mystical harmonies—throughout the bright spheres," reveal in a vivid flash the stern beauty of Milton. The lines also on Shakespeare are extraordinarily illuminating, ending in:—"Life in all shapes, aims, and fates, is there warmed by one great human heart." Only a wide-souled poet could have thus written of his fellows, recognizing powers quite diverse to his own. He has also, elsewhere, a bitter jibe at Byron's "Manfred." This Manfred:—

> "Projected from the bilious childe,"

and

> "Somewhere about his grinder teeth,
> He mouthed of thoughts that grilled beneath."

—caustic enough one would imagine, but Meredith concludes "Tragic? Ho! The cities, not the mountains blow such bladders," but however caustic, true—for Meredith in avoiding sentimental emotion himself, hated false heroics with an unbending austerity. The mind of the reader of Meredith's poems must be braced to an equal austerity if the work is to be enjoyed.

It is uncritical to compare him to Browning, for Browning's heart beat for humanity and Meredith's for Earth, although in the matter of obscurity Meredith is even more difficult of immediate comprehension at times, than are the most complex stanzas in *Sordello*. Again, Browning in his "My Last Duchess" gives us a picture in words that resembles a portrait etched by Rembrandt, whereas Meredith's Ballads on tragic life, for the most part, remain somewhat blurred sketches—always excepting "Attila" and "Queen Theodolinda"—and even in "Attila" there are lines that jar the sensitive ear; as the two following the scene of the rage of Attila's followers on finding their hero dead at Ildico's hand:—

> "She, the wild contention's cause,
> Combed her hair with quiet paws."

One asks despairingly, where was the poet's comic spirit sleeping when he could utter so horrible a travesty of the tragic?

Here the apparent absence of any imaginative sympathy on the part of Meredith may be the reason for this serio-comic line. It must be remembered that he himself said, "When strong emotion is in tide against the active mind there is perforce confusion." Therefore we find him ever barring the door of his mind against the intrusion of feeling, or emotion, he was, as it were, the Scientist of poesy; he declared that earth and her lessons could never be distorted or misunderstood by the *brain* of a man. Such a poem as "Mariana" of the *Moated Grange*, would have been an object of derision to Meredith; that any of Nature's, or Earth's ordinances should play the part of a Greek chorus to the moaning of a deserted young woman, would have appeared to him to be a rank blasphemy against the proper reading of Earth. And it must be allowed that he was, to a certain degree, right in this; the eternal sea does not break, break, on the cold grey stones throughout the eons of its obedience to an unalterable law only to be as an echo to the grief inspired by the loss of a loved one. How far removed his own method is from this harnessing the forces of Earth, as of obedient steeds, to the chariot of personal bereavement, is plainly seen in his poem, "Faith on Trial"; for here, in the depth of his grief, he can write (treating of Death as the "sunderer," the leader of the wolves of pain):—

> "We stand upon isles, who stand:
> A shadow before us, and back,
> A phantom the inhabited land.
> We may cry to the Sunderer, 'Spare
> That dearest!' he loosens his pack."

Few poets could have thus summed up, in so few lines, the desolation shadowy before us, men and women as but phantoms; and the awful hunting, relentless pursuing, of the Sunderer, Death, and we crying, "Spare our dearest" in sobbing futility. But then, with a marvellous detachment, and an undaunted courage, he continues in very despite of his loss:—

> "The changeful visible face
> Of our mother I sought for my food;
> Crumbs by the way to sustain."

And he can break into ecstasy over the blossoms of the wild cherry tree with no reference to his personal sorrow.

> " Now gazed I where, sole upon gloom,
> As flower-bush in sunspecked crag,
> Up the spine of the double combe
> With yew-boughs heavily cloaked,
> A young apparition shone ;
> Known, yet wonderful, white
> Surpassingly ; doubtfully known,
> For it struck as the birth of Light.
> Even Day from the dark unyoked.
> It waved like a pilgrim flag
> O'er processional penitents flown,
> When of old they broke surrounding yon spine ;
> O ! the pure wild-cherry in bloom ! "

This calm, stoical philosophy is altogether admirable, it is a mental re-birth to study with this man, who never moans, but can say with unquivering lip :—

> " By Death as by Life, are we fed :
> The two are one spring."

If, as we hinted before, he bound himself to Earth and to Earth only, what a gallant lover of his mistress he showed himself ! When he wrote of the stars, writing : " Implacable they shine," and gazing on them until they fade in the coming daylight he cries of Earth :—

> " Then at the new Flood of customary morn,
> Look at her through her showers,
> Her mists, her streaming gold,
> A wonder edges the familiar face :
> She wears no more that robe of printed hours ;
> Half strange seems Earth, and sweeter than her flowers."

That " robe of printed hours " reveals strikingly the poet and the artist.

To walk with Meredith is to companion a deep thinker as well as an artist ; compare his thoughts, as he expresses them, with the futilities of the Oxford youth of yesterday : for, however odious, comparison alone enables us to state a conviction ; Snowdon may loom as a high mountain until we have stood beneath Kilimanjaro ; and Meredith soars above most poets as vastly as Kilimanjaro soars

above Snowdon. It may be true that round him the rolling clouds are spread—clouds of redundancy, mists of meanings hopelessly involved, thorns and nettles of inappropriated words—yet, above these, the eternal sunshine settles on his head. He is, in another sense, the Iron that sharpeneth iron; Verrall said of Meredith's novels, "that if we do not take the pains to appreciate Meredith so far as may be possible for us, we miss the best chance that Englishmen have, or ever had, to cultivate a valuable faculty which is of all least natural to us. This faculty is wit." This is a large saying, "the best chance that we have, or ever had," of cultivating our faculty of wit (not forgetting the implied sneer, "as far as may be possible for us"), and this verdict is applicable to the poems as well as to the novels. We must gird the loins of our mind to keep up with this brain of a man striding and reaching "tip-toe at the ultimate bound." His own lines are the most accurate description of his attitude :—"To light and song my yearning aimed," and :—

> "I keep the youth of souls who pitch
> Their joy in this old heart of things."

He retained this youth and this joy, this haunter of the woods and the uplands, this robust lover of Nature, who took his stand on Earth; and also drew his strength from her. And because he loved Nature, and chose to look no further and no deeper than to her, he is ever questioning, and ever failing to find an answer; he writes :—

> "But the worst of *me* is, that when I bow my head,
> I perceive a thought wriggling away in the dust,
> And I follow its tracks, quite forgetful, instead
> Of humble acceptance; for question I must!"

There can be no doubt that a manly, honest questioning is of more value than an unfounded optimism; and it is time that Meredith is given the only throne he coveted, that of the brain of a man. It is to the intellect, the Reason, the Wit that he alone appeals; and it is by those powers he must finally be judged. For when he forsakes the straight, unshadowed road of Reason, he fails, and fails lamentably. His narrative poems are frankly impossible as poetry, save

" Attila," " Theodolinda," " The Old Chartist," and perhaps " Juggling Jerry," for in the latter his observation and love of earth reveals itself. But many poets have failed in narrative poetry; Wordsworth, Tennyson, and many others; Browning alone was a master in this line, for Milton's magnificent " Samson " is altogether too vast and royal to be classed as " narrative."

If we attempted to sum up Meredith as a poet, we shall discover that he is too sword-sharp in intellect to please emotional persons; that religious souls will miss in him the Pisgah view, the illumination of a John Bunyan; but that it is perilous to ignore him or to miss his keen educative influence, to miss it is to convict ourselves of intellectual sloth, to prove that we have lost the power of concentration, and failed in raising in ourselves a wit to reflect the flashes in Meredith.

That he was great is our gain; that he was not greater must only make us put a finger of reverence to the lip, remembering our feeble gropings; our cup of emotion for his wine of Reason; this George Meredith, prose-poet, poet-philosopher, rugged champion of Earth, rebellious but undefeated Titan; Hail!

ARTHUR HOOD.

WINDS

OF all the winds, I do not know
Which one I like the best to blow.
In Spring and Summer, winds are sweet
That softly stir the springing wheat,
And part the meadow grasses fair,
Like any lovely lady's hair.
Or Autumn winds that whirl and shout
And toss the yellow leaves about.
Or winds that howl on Winter nights
And splutter all the candle lights
That lift the carpet from the floor,
And set a-banging every door.

I think that I shall never know
Which wind I like the best to blow.

MARY E. PYNE.

I. INVOCATION BY ARTIFICERS

WE who remember in the dim brown lands
Those who were living when the world was young,
Dry-eyed we stand, with blue thin veinèd hands,
Gnawing on envy of a song that's sung.

We would have laboured, only words grow old
Past usage. Building our shifting absolutes
On dubious sand, we struggled. Now we scold
In crabbed despair, and still the heart refutes—

Come in the night, O wisdom I have lost,
Before this crumbles, this last world I know,
Come as a moonlit squadron, daring, crossed
Dark lines of battle—and the guns were slow ;
Come in a glint of rainfall, silver rays,
Bright million words clear-cut, newborn for praise !

II. INCURABLE ROMANTIC

IT is not that I love you ; how can I tell
The meaning of ten thousand million loves
Weeping and sighing, sundered or content ?
How can I tell when words, words, dribble
From frothing lips and stare on smudgy page
How they have meaning ? How shall I cry :
" Fiat Justicia ! ", abolish self and soul,
Deny plurality and rest content
In mystic immanence with rock and bird ?
How shall I know I love you ? God so made
The world. And shall I call his making love ?
I only know I need you, you are I :
No need of "love"; a world of words too many,
These have betrayed us. You have left me, and I bleed.

III. AND THESE OUR MATINS . . .

WHEN the wind blows
Night-folded daffodils
We sing :
Our souls disclose
Bleak ecstasies, and wring
Clear song that flows
In stony rills.

Then freeze the fount of sorrow, lock
Your brazen gates, O barren moon !
Memorial bony fingers knock
Their bony tune. Cast not the rune,
O lovely night,
Shed not the moonlit robe. Conceal
Darkness intangible, unreal ;
Pluck not the chord within the mind
That thou alone, O night, canst find !

From drooping snowdrift, high plateau,
Uneasy murmur breaks to sound,
Drip-drop, to trickle
Underground ;
And through the night
Chill waters flow
Where daffodils and white
Narcissi grow ;
And these our matins
Rise and ring,
Austere and cold, the stony hills,
Till words can shatter
Living rock
And pent emotion recombine
With stranger matter, torn from these
Its set Hermitic matrices !

IV. AND I HAVE TURNED TO WESTWARD . . .

"A YEAR ago we parted
At the bridge" I heard them sing
When a few sad stars were shining
And I remembering—

* * *

O leave the changing forests,
The bowers we have known,
Let heart of youth lie broken
And mind go forth alone

To face the iron future
With a courage built on air,
And watch the arching spandrel
Swing into beauty there!

* * *

Her little breasts were lovely
And braved the winter thorn
Till bronze and carbon spluttered
A blue electric scorn,

And I grew blind in folly
For the gods that gave me this,
A beauty that is broken
In cold analysis;

And I have turned to westward
With Greville, Cowper, Clare,
And seen the darker vision
Begotten of despair.

* * *

If the faith that Thou endurest
Fail in the darksome night
And words grow thin on ages
Lost in the open light,

Mark how a vacant heaven,
A blank unseeing stare,
A madness built on chaos
Shall be my solitaire!

V. ON READING SOME NEGLECTED POETS

THIS is a long road in a dubious mist ;
Not with a groan nor any heard complaint
We march, uncomprehending, not expecting Time
To show us beacons. Others never knew.

When we have struggled on a little farther
This madness will yield of itself,
There will not be any singing or sudden joy,
But a load will be set down. Finality.

And maybe no one will ever come,
No other traveller passing that way,
Therefore the load we lifted will be left,
A milestone, insignificant, alone.

MICHAEL ROBERTS.

SLEEP

SLEEP'S like a cloud upon an August day
That shields us from the sun's too ardent kiss.
Sleep delicately bridges the abyss
That separates the hours—a calm delay,
A space in which to freshen for the fray
That is our life. We willingly dismiss
Reality that we may know the bliss
Awaiting us when cares are closed away.

Sleep glides with us into the quiet deep
Of ageless ocean where there is no sound
Save moonbeams' dripping cadences that keep
Our passive limbs enthralled, while round and round
In somnolent slow circles they bedim
Earth's fading echoes with their runic hymn.

MABEL POSEGATE.

JOHN DONNE: POET AND METAPHYSICIAN.[1]

THAT remarkable school of poetry, aptly classified by Johnson as the "Metaphysical School," which flourished in England in the early seventeenth century, represents the crystallization of a curious trend of thought peculiar to the period. The introduction of the hermetical writings of Paracelsus and that elaborate exposition of mystical philosophy, De Occulta Philosophia of Cornelius Agrippa, had aroused widespread interest in metaphysics, and in those emanative systems practised by the early Neo-Platonists, and induced a revival in the study of the mysteries of alchemy, which was regarded as a guide to the secrets of the universe. This curious awakening of interest in the abstract and transcendental had a strikingly apparent effect on the poetry of the times, and produced that group of mystical poets which has for centuries irritated and perplexed the uninitiated. Poetry to the mystics assumed an entirely new aspect, and, regardless of all accepted traditions, they evolved methods of diction and prosody of their own. They adopted a deliberate carelessness of all formalities, and created for themselves an etherealised atmosphere of filtered and rarefied thought.

It is to John Donne that this remarkable movement owes its original impetus. He came at a time when the full flood of English poetry had settled into carefully constructed channels, yet with reckless unconcern he set himself the task of diverting that stream into new and labyrinthine ways, cascading joyously into the vast unknown. Sir Edmund Gosse has likened him to a "blind Samson in the Elizabethan gate" wrecking "the beautiful temple of Spenserian fancy." His "blind" forces have, nevertheless, introduced a peculiarly invigorating and fascinating development in the history of English poetry.

Mr. John Hayward's recent edition of the poems and selected prose of Donne has supplied a long-felt need for a concise yet more-or-less complete presentation of the work

[1] *John Donne: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose.* Edited by John Hayward. Nonesuch Press. 8s. 6d.

of Donne as a whole, showing his gradual development in verse and prose alike. A clear understanding of the many aspects of his vivid and striking individuality can be gained only by a detailed investigation of his work both as a poet and a prose writer, for, as Mr. Hayward points out, Donne's poems and prose are closely related and interdependent, as the " substance of which they are composed is compact and indivisible, while only the mould which contains it is different." The text of the poems in the present edition is substantially the same as that of Professor Grierson in his scholarly and accurate tomes, *The Poems of John Donne* (2 vols.) published at Oxford in 1912. In regard to the selections of prose, Mr. Hayward has made an interesting and representative presentation of Donne's work, throughout which may be traced the growth of a vigorous and brilliant mind.

It is by Donne's early love lyrics, written according to Ben Jonson " ere he was twenty-five years old," that he is most generally known. Here, though his later interest in mysticism is hardly as yet awakened, the peculiar characteristics of his style are already well developed. Ignoring the standardized idyllic and pseudo-romantic trappings of amorous verse, which were in vogue at the time, he evolved for himself a vivid and realistic setting for his vigorous and intensely naturalistic poems. He adopted, moreover, an entirely original attitude towards his subject, filching, it has been said, his sentiments " from the depths of science." It is the mechanism of emotion which interests him, and in accordance he originated a peculiarly self-conscious and analytical method of treatment. As Dryden has remarked, Donne " affects the metaphysics not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses where Nature only should reign, and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy." Mr. Courthope, in his *History of English Poetry*, has pointed out: " To him love, in its infinite variety and inconsistency, represented the principle of perpetual flux in nature."

Throughout these early lyrics Donne strikes a remarkably natural note: " For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me

love. . . . " he cries, or turns on the sun with the vehement demand :—

> " Busie old foole, unruly sunne,
> Why dost thou thus,
> Through windows, and through curtains call on us ? "

There is about these sudden flashes a peculiarly modern flavour of straightforward sincerity and simplicity. The opening lines of his poems are as a rule particularly striking and forceful : —

> " I long to talke with some old lover's ghost,
> Who dyed before the god of Love was borne:"

and after making such a spectacular entry upon his subject he springs with feverish intensity from one thought to another, yet never failing to link up his intellectual excursions with amazing versatility. He uses homely every-day occurrences as a vivid background for his verse :—

> " I taught my silkes their rustlings to forbear,
> Even my oppress'd shoes dumb and silent were."

He is at once simple and direct, and yet restlessly obscure and subtle, his imagination roaming over vast territories, coining imagery of fantastic character. Yet throughout all he is terse and explicit. " Few writers," remarked De Quincey, " have shown more extraordinary compass of power than Donne, for he combined what no other man has ever done—the last sublimation of dialectical subtlety and address with the most impassioned majesty." Much has been written on the subject of Donne's reckless disregard of the accepted standards of harmony and smoothness, his impish delight in " topsy turvified " conceits, and rough stumbling lines which :—

> " . . . negligently left unrounded, look
> Like many angled figures, in the book
> Of some great Conjurer that would enforce
> Nature."

It appears, however, to have been the deliberate policy of the mystics to discard all artifices which appealed merely to the senses, and to produce allurements for the intellect ;

it was their determination to refine language to the very quick of meaning, to produce poetry " thin as burnt air." Donne himself remarks :—

> " I sing not siren-like, to tempt ; for I
> Am harsh."

He could, if he wished, write pure and uninterrupted melody, as in the song beginning : " Goe, and catche a falling starre," or in that sudden beautiful flash :—

> " No Spring, nor Summer Beauty hath such grace,
> As I have seen in one Autumnal face."

Or again in the lines from the Heroical Epistle, Sapho to Philænis :—

> " Thou art not soft, and cleare, and strait, and faire,
> As Down, as Stars, Cedars, and Lillies are."

Or in that brilliant passage :—

> " I will not look upon the quickning Sun,
> But straight her beauty to my sense shall run ;
> The ayre shall note her soft, the fire most pure ;
> Water suggest her clear, and the earth sure."

And this appears after such extraordinary lines as :—

> " Let our armes clasp like Ivy, and our fear
> Freese us together, that we may stick here."

Even in his most extravagant similies, however, there is a forceful pointing of sense, as in that curious comparison of his wife and himself to " stiff twin compasses " :—

> " Thy soule, the fixt foot, makes no show
> To move, but doth if the other doe.
> And though it in the center sit,
> Yet when the other far doth rome,
> It leanes, and hearkens after it ;
> And growes erect, as that comes home."

In contrast to Donne's intellectual absorption there is a light cynical vein running through his early poems, rather suggestive of the later Cavalier poets, often delicately ironic as in " Woman's Constancy " beginning :—" Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day," and again in " The Indifferent " :—"

"I can love both faire and browne,

. . . . . .

I can love her, and her, and you, and you,
I can love any so she be not true."

This descends at times to mere youthful exuberance, as in the last lines of "The Bracelet."

It is, however, on the whole the intellectual side of emotion which fascinates Donne :—

"But he who loveliness within
Hath found, all outward loathes,
For he who colour loves, and skinne,
Loves but their oldest clothes."

In the main Donne's preoccupation with the abstract leaves his poetry bare of descriptive beauties. There are, however, here and there, scattered through his poetry, vivid word pictures which show a marked power of observation. He speaks of the "Carelesse flowers strow'd on the waters face," sucked down by the "curled whirlepooles," and of the taper's "beamie eye, Amorously twinkling, beckens the giddie flie." And again :—

"When I behold a streame, which, from the Spring,
Doth with a doubtful melodious murmuring,
Or in a speechless slumber calmly ride
Her wedded channels bosom, and then chide
And bend her brows and swell if any bough
Do but stoop downe or kiss her upmost brow:"

And again in the early poem, "The Primrose," where the flowers in their infinity :—

"Make a terrestriall galaxie,
As the small starres do in the sky."

His poetry, moreover, abounds in felicitous phrasing as in the line :—"We'll build in sonnets pretty roomes," or in the apt description of the birds as :—"The free inhabitants of the Plyant aire," and in the lines :—

"... he sinkes the deep,
Where harmlesse fish monastique silence keep."

And again in the "Elegie on the Lady Marckham" :—

" In her this sea of death hath made no breach,
But as the tide doth wash the slimie beach,
And leaves embroder'd workes upon the sand,
So is her flesh refin'd by deaths cold hand."

Another feature in Donne's verse is his extraordinarily morbid curiosity and interest in ugliness, decay, and death; as in " The Funerall," " The Relique," " The Dampe," and the poem entitled " Julia." This curious medieval delight in probing into the details of death and disease is again seen in his " Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions," when, during a serious illness, Donne analysed the " severall steps " of his disease.

Among his contemporaries Donne's reputation as a wit of the highest order was unquestioned. Carew declared him to be: —

" A King who ruled as he thought fit
The universal monarchy of wit."

And Dryden proclaimed him " the greatest wit of the nation." Satirical exposures of contemporary abuses are, however, inclined to date rapidly, and Donne's " Satyres " written in that extraordinary " dromedary trot " are inclined to be a trifle tedious to the modern reader, although here and there a thrust may, even at this late date, drive home, as in the description of the lawyer who " throwes—

" Like nets or lime-twigs, wheresoever he goes,
His title of Barrister, on every wench,
And wooes in language of the Pleas and Bench:"

And even in that vast tangle of subtle allusions a line may start out from the page resonant with beauty. In the earlier poems, however, his fine irony, and satirical spirit are particularly attractive to the modern reader, as in that brilliant fantasy, " The Will ":—

" Before I sigh my last gaspe, let me breath,
Great Love, some Legacies; Here I bequeath
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see,
If they be blinde, then Love, I give them thee;
My tongue to Fame; to Embassadours mine eares;
To women or the sea, my teares.

Thou, Love, hast taught mee heretofore
By making mee serve her who, had twenty more,
That I should give to none, but such, as had too much before."

The later poems of Donne belonging to the middle period of his life, after his marriage but before he took Orders, are peculiarly interesting as showing the development of Donne's interest in mysticism. He describes the change in himself in a "Verse Letter" to Mr. Rowland Woodward :—

"Like one who in her third widdowhood doth professe
Her selfe a Nunne, tyed to retirednesse,
So affects my Muse now, a chast fallownesse ;

Since shee to few, yet to too many hath showne
How love-song weeds and Satyrique thornes are growne
Where seeds of better Arts were early sown."

The poems of this period are heralded in, significantly enough, by a vivid descriptive poem: "The Storme." Donne at this time was passing through a chaotic period of mental unrest. His spirit of scepticism urged him to explore ; he turned feverishly from one theory to another, toying with metaphysics, wavering on the boundaries of mysticism, scaling the heights of ecstatic emotion, only to fall abruptly into the depths of despondency and gloom. "Make my dark heavy Poëm light and light," he cries :—

"For though through many streights and lands I roame,
I launch at Paradise and I saile towards home,"

His verse during this period becomes turgid and obscure. He himself confesses in his letter to Sir Robert Carr, "I did best when I had least truth for my subjects. In this present case there is so much truth as it defeats all poetry."

In the "Progress of the Soule," he seizes with enthusiasm upon the Pythagorian doctrine of metempsychosis ; his interest, however is brief, and the poem is tossed aside unfinished. He "toyes with the mystic's theory of the perfection and harmony, of the universe," and declares :—

" Built of all th' elements as our bodyes are:
That Litle of Earth that is in it, is a faire
Delicious garden where all sweets are sowne.
It is a cherishing fyer which dryes in mee
Griefe which did drowne mee; and half quenched by it
Are satrique fyres which urg'd me to have writt
In skorne of all:"

" If men be worlds," he says, " there is in everyone—

" Something to answere in some proportion
All the world's riches: and in good men this
Vertue, our forme's forme and our soule's soule, is."

That curious theory of the Neo-Platonists of the harmony of the stars appears to have interested Donne, and he asserts :—

" The spheares have music, but they have no tongue,
Their harmony is rather danced than sung."

He is deeply influenced, moreover, by the doctrine of ecstasy as expounded by Plotinus :—

" Seeke we then ourselves in ourselves; for as
Men force the sunne with much more force to passe,
By gathering his beames with a christall glasse;

So wee, If wee into our selves will turne,
Blowing our sparkes of vertue may outburne
The straw, which doth about our hearts sojurn."

He advocates the Mystic's power of vision, and urges :—

" . . . up into the watch-towre get,
And see all things despoyl'd of fallacies:
Thou shalt not peep through lattices of eyes,
Nor heare through Labyrinths of eares, nor learne
By circuit, or collections to discerne."

He cries out against the accepted materialistic standards, declaring :—

" As new Philosophy arrests the Sunne,
And bids the passive earth about it runne,
So we have dull'd our minde, it hath no ends;
Onely the bodie's busie and pretends;
As dead low earth ecclipses and controules
The quick high Moone! so doth the body, Soules."

And again he writes :—

> " For of Meridians and Parallels
> Man hath weav'd out a net, and this net throwne
> Upon the Heavens, and now they are his owne.
> Loth to go up the hill or labour thus
> To go to heaven, we make heaven come to us."

" What hope," he asks, " have we to know ourselves, when we—

> Know not the least things which for our use be ?
> We see in Authors, too stiffe to recant,
> A hundred controversies of an Ant ;
> And yet one watches, starves, freeses, and sweats
> To know but Catechismes and Alphabets
> Of unconcerning things, matters of fact ;
> How others on our stage their parts did Act ;
> What Cæsar did, yea, and what Cicero said.
> Why grasse is greene, or why our blood is red,
> Are mysteries which none have reach'd unto.
> In this low forme, poore soule, what wilt thou doe ?
> When wilt thou shake off this Pedantery,
> Of being taught by sense, and Fantasie ?
> Thou look'st through spectacles ; small things seeme great
> Below ; . . . "

He emphasizes continually the mystical theory of the identity of man with all creation :—

> " As man is of the world, the heart of man,
> Is an Epitome of God's great booke
> Of creatures, and man need no farther look."

And again he writes :

> " If all things be in all,
> As I thinke, since all were, are and shall
> Be, be made of the same elements :
> Each thing, each thing implyes or represents,
> Then man is a world."

" The world is a great Volume," he declares, " and man the Index of that Booke." This idea of man as a " Microcosm, a world in himself," was elaborated by that exalted mystic, Thomas Traherne, and recurs centuries later in Walt Whitman's vivid lines :

> " All music is what awakens from you when you
> Are reminded by the instruments."

Yet, although Donne wavered in the regions of the mystic's " shoreless ocean of light," his exalted moods were brief, and he returned to doubt and dispondency. " How poor and inconsiderable a ragge of this world is man," he writes ; and again declares :—

> " Thou knowst how wan a ghost this our world is ;
> And learn'st thus much by our Anatomie,
> That it should more affright, than pleasure thee."

He describes this peculiar variableness in his temperament in one of his later sonnets :—

> " Oh, to vex me, contraryes meet in one ;
> . . . . . .
> So my devout fitts come and go away
> Like a fantastique ague . . . "

As Mr. Hayward points out, Donne was an eclectic. He gathered together with amazing erudition a heterogeneous mass of material, but failed to present a systematic body of philosophy. It was not until later that the fluctuating trend of his thought was welded together into a definite system by his successors. As a metaphysician, therefore, Donne is somewhat disappointing ; he opens the door but a crack into the realms of mysticism, and closes it all too hastily, leaving the reader doubtful whether the poet himself has passed over the threshold, or is still beating at the door.

The " Divine Poems " represent Donne's final development, characterized by a " white sincerity " and pure spiritual intensity. In the " Verses Written to Mr. Tilman After he had Taken Orders " he writes :—

> " If then th' Astronomers whereas they spie
> A new-found starre, their Opticks magnifie,
> How brave are those who with their Engine can
> Bring man to heaven, and heaven againe to man."

Philosophy now becomes subordinated to religion ; his vigorous intense exaltations are intensified into an ecstasy of remorse and melancholy :—

" Oh make thy selfe with holy mourning blacke,
And red with blushing, as thou art with sinne."

" You which beyond that heaven which was most high,
Have found new sphears, and of new lands can write,
Powre new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
Drowne my world with my weeping earnestly,"

The extreme intensity of his feeling at this period is shown in the forceful sonnet beginning :—

" Batter my heart, three person'd God ; for you
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine and seeke to mend ;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend
Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new."

His lines reverberate with sonorous depths of emotion :

" At the round earths imagined corners, blow
Your trumpets, Angells, and arise, arise
From death, you numberlesse infinities
Of soules, and to your scattred bodies goe,"

Mr. Hayward's selections from the prose works of Donne are extremely well devised. They include a selection from the early Paradoxes and Problems, that elaborate satire upon the Jesuits, " Ignatius, his Conclave," a number of letters, the Meditations, and the Sermons. In making his selections from the Sermons, Mr. Hayward has aimed, not at showing merely the high-water mark of Donne's rhetorical genius, but at representing the " various stages through which Donne carried his argument from the low level of exposition to the summit of eloquence."

For sheer rhetorical splendour Donne is unsurpassed ; with swift cumulative potency he constructs magnificent temples of the mind, embossed with all the opulence of imagery and infinity of fancy that a mind steeped in the learning of centuries could convey. By pure force of emotional intensity he was able to sweep into immensities of vision :

" Inlarge this Meditation upon this great world, Man, so farr, as to consider the immensitie of the creatures this world produces ; our creatures are our thoughts, creatures that are borne Gyants ; that reach from East to West, from Earth to Heaven, that doe not onely

bestride all the Sea, and Land, but span the Sunn and Firmament at once ; My thoughts reach all ; comprehend all. Inexplicable mistery ; I their Creator am in a close prison, in a sicke bed, any where, and any one of my Creatures, my thoughts, is with the Sunne, and beyond the Sunne, overtakes the Sunne, and overgoes the Sunne in one pace, one steppe, everywhere."

Considered as a whole the work of Donne is outstanding as the work of a great innovator. He introduced a spirit of buoyancy, freedom, and adventure, revealing vast territories of the mind as yet unexplored, and counteracting any trend toward over-facile fluency. His achievement has been summed up by Carew in the lines :

> " The Muses' garden, with pedantic weeds
> O'er-spread, was purged by Thee ; the lazy seeds
> Of servile imitation throwne away
> And fresh invention planted."

ISABEL COGAN.

THE INVALID

GOD ! must I lie here ever, in a cage
Of bricks and mortar, and in sloth grow pale
And feel the very manhood in me fail
And active strength bow down in peevish rage ?
To turn in hate the idle printed page
To find books weary and my wits grown stale ?
Decrepitude in youth, is this my tale,
The bitter full cup of my heritage ?

Never again to spend long strenuous hours
Swinging home blithely under sun and showers ?
Nor wander careless as the clouds that pass
Nor tramp far counties when the dead leaves fall
Nor lie in the deep cool of summer grass
A dusty wayfarer, no more at all ?

JOHN SILVER.

TO OMAR KHAYYÁM

(" Why, all the saints and sages, who discussed
Of all the two worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish prophets, forth, their words to scorn
Are scattered, and their mouths are stopped with dust.")

SOPHIST and sorcerer!
For one Summer hour
I sat with you, beneath the shaggy pine;
And, with the magic of your power,
Drank deep of beauty's wine.
You wrought your spell!—and I was lifted up,
Borne on the cloudy sweetness of your song;
Of bitterness and wisdom, drained your cup,
Or slept in shadow, with death's mighty throng.
Unwilling;—caught within your mesh,
Woven for credulous ears;
You bound me with the fetters of the flesh,
Where foolish souls lie tangled, countless years.
But for a moment,—and one thrust
Of truth's bright sword, has pierced your armour through;

Are *words* of saints and sages turned to dust?
From each word sown, undying power grew!
Unseen, unheard;
The Almighty Word
Brought dreaming silence into life,
And lit the void of darkness with its light;
And, with the gleaming sharpness of its knife,
Severed the good and evil from our sight.
A burning coal, it glowed
Upon the altar fires of prophecy,
And from the lips of Christ it flowed,
A spring of immortality.

Strong with the strength of ocean's watery bars,
Soft as the veiling vapours of the mist,
Immovable, as regiments of stars,
Sweet as the dawn the glowing sun has kissed.

Swift as the shadow of the seagull's wings,
Secret as sighing whispers of the deep,
Pure as the crystal flowers Winter flings,
Mysterious, as death's unfathomed sleep.

The words of God and man
Are still the spirit's key;
Alive before all life began,
Bond of infinity!

Words have set the fires of war
Upleaping, in mad haste,
And words have been the conquerors
To build again their waste.
Words have, with a pen of blood;
Spelled freedom for the slave;
Or called a sleeping Lazarus
From superstition's grave.
Words are the fingers on the dial.
That mark the clock of time;
The stern, swift sentence at the trial
Of dark negation's crime.

Words are the subtle threads that bind
The destiny of men;
The message of the Eternal Mind,
Written with God's own pen.
Words are the food on which the spirit feeds,
The air that gives it breath;
The gold that satisfies its needs;
The power that saves from death!

The vesture of God's presence fades;
Earth dies, with flower, and song;—
But words are born, as light is born,
Where death and darkness throng.
They only stand where all things fall,
They only live where all things die;
They are the Voice, the Spirit's call
From spaces of Infinity!

MARY ALETHEA WOODWARD.

MYSELF

I ASK Myself
Who am I?
What am I?
Why?
or
Whence?

Am I a Changeling,
A Changeling child,
Eyes heavy with dreams,
Forlorn and wild?

There were dreams once?
Why ask Myself? Things
More lovely, more fragile
Than butterfly's wings.

What was Romance then?
Myself, do I cry
For a cloak that was outworn
And long since laid by?
"Too ragged now,
Frayed, tattered," you said?
Poor patchwork pieces
Your glory is dead!

Am I a Jester?
(Mouth twisted with pain)
A Stringer of Rhymes
Or a Painter again?

There were dreams once?
Why ask Myself? Well,
What have I made of them?
Who then can tell?

Whence came the jest then?
From Life in its youth?
Laugh, laugh to Myself

I am learning the truth!
Lines but half written,
Strange shadows escaped,
Why did I leave you,
Unfinished, unshaped?

Am I a Failure
The hope of His hands,
The child He created,
World-beaten, unmanned?

There were dreams once?
Why ask Myself? Yet
Faith holds a vision
I cannot forget;

Of a Boy with the shavings
A carpenter made
Who twisted and twirled them
And laughed as He played.
O Man of All Sorrows
I stretch out my hand
The Child that was Jesus
Will know—understand!

JOYCE SAMBROOK.

DOG-WOOD

I saw a dog-wood blooming
It took my heart a-wing,
For I was born where dog-wood
Blossomed in the spring.

Its white winged arms were the loveliest things
Beneath the April skies—
I never thought that dog-wood
Would bring tears into my eyes.

TRAVIS TUCK JORDAN.

THE DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY

XXII: MICHAEL STRANGE—EDGAR LEE MASTERS—MARK VAN DOREN—GLENN WARD DRESBACH—ROBERT FROST—EDWARD ARLINGTON ROBINSON

The approaching of each season with the prospect of the output of poetry brings a feeling akin to the experience of Aeneas when he went to the Elysian Fields and found Anchises considering among the unborn souls those who were destined to animate his race and make it illustrious in the future. Anchises showed him the shades that some day would be Romulus, Brutus, Camillus, the Gracchi, Caesar, and other heroes. Our publishers appear to be striving to do as much for us.

Foremost among the books on my desk are: Appleton (New York), *Jack Kelso*, by Edgar Lee Masters; Bobbs-Merrill (Indianapolis, Ind.), *A Woman at Dusk*, by Arthur Stringer; Boni & Leveright (New York), *The Temptation of Anthony*, by Isador Schneider; Albert and Charles Boni (New York), *Now the Sky*, by Mark Van Doren; Brentano's (New York), *Selected Poems*, by Michael Strange; W. E. Chase (Madison, Wis.), *Poems*, by Wilfred E. Chase; Doubleday-Doran (New York), *The Plays of Noel Coward;* Dutton (New York), *Cry of Time*, by Hazel Hall; McBride (New York), *Children of Darkness*, by Gladys Oaks; Four Seas Company (Boston), *The First Harvest*, by Mary Leighton; Henry Hole & Co. (New York), *West-Running Brook*, by Robert Frost; Houghton-Mifflin Co. (New York), *A Bronco Pegasus*, by Charles F. Lummis; Alfred A. Knopf (New York), *Collected Poems*, by A. E. Coppard; MacMillan (New York), *Sonnets*, by Edward Arlington Robinson; *Selected Poems*, by Carl Spitteler, *Midsummer and Other Tales*, by John Masefield; Mosher Press (Portland, Me.), *Sky Riders*, by Wade Oliver; and *All My Life*, by Ruth Cramer; Oxford University Press, *The Oxford Book of American Verse;* Sully (New York), *House of Happiness*, by B. Y. Williams; *Flutes of Childhood*, by Thomas Emmet Moore; *The Light of the World*, Collected by Joseph Morris and St. Clair Adams; Turner & Co. (Dallas, Tex.), *Star-Dust and Stone*, by Glenn Ward Dresbach; Viking Press (New York), *Hafiz*, by Clarence K. Streit; The Woman's Press, *Christ in the Poetry of To-day*, by Martha Foot Crow.

In glancing over these books, one is arrested by the following four lovely poems of Michael Strange (Mrs. John Barrymore), expressing ideally mother love:—

Little son Robin of ivory and honey
Of secret beautiful starts and returns—
Just like some magical heifer darting from beam to beam of the piping moon—

Reminiscent are you of late homing with those who walk on the highest boughs
Without stirring the air—

Reminiscent and damp your eyes with a vapour from streams that are
freed in May but on the other side of the clouds—

O your hair round your pale little face
Like a March sunbeam o'er the pensive wing of an angel.

And your smile such a gleaming bow letting loose on your immature
cheeks—
A flood of wild dimples that sing that sing
The source of an hundred immortalized marbles.

" For Leonard—His First Easter at St. Paul's," she writes :—

Sleep well in your trim school cot my beloved—
Despite miles of the night between I am there—
I know every way your head can look on its pillow—
Each tossed expression of your arms and half-open hands
Large solemn sweetness of your closed lids—
Outline of your boy's first tallness set gently unstraight in sleep—

And I am grateful my son for such love as I bear you—
For it is not liable to the earth with its shift and changes—
Nor is it liable to you—
But stands in full white witness of itself
Towards the Everlasting.

" For Diana—on her Sixth Birthday," Mrs. Barrymore adds :—

Relation of my daughter's violently flying dark head . .
To these yellow tulips transfigured in pale March sun
On my sill
Her elfin gestures spangling the room
Like a sudden brightness waving our poplar after the rain . . .
Her stillness pixie rush . . .
Mobile intensity
Of her heart-shaped pale blur of a face . . .
Lovely gay readiness
Of that taut swift form
For welcoming witches or angels . . .
So at one with the moment
The instant and all its eternity of Depth. . . .
Unconscious . . . enchanted still . . .
So enchanting . . . enchanting . . .
Toeing the outer edge
Of however flung lariat of words
Smiling pointedly beyond
In all the weird coquetry of an immortal state

. . . Super equipped . . .
The heaven of the world still yours
My wing-swift daughter Diana . . .

And " For Robin " she offers :—

A while ago when my little son was ill
Three evenings he pulled down my head to rest on his narrow white breast—
And his light child's hands so transparent with illness wavered in and out through my hair—
O he held me my little son did in the curve of his unborn tenderness—
And I know in that moment his sweet child's mind was securely forever imprinted—
With the yearning face of my love.

A reminder of our majestic Lincoln comes to us from Edgar Lee Master's *Jack Kelso*. This dramatic poem by the author of *Spoon River Anthology* (reviewed in the POETRY REVIEW on its appearance), covers 264 pages. Mr. Masters in this poem has created the figure of Jack Kelso as a poet and wanderer with the dimensions of a universal character. To history, Kelso is known as the companion of Lincoln during the early days in New Salem, and as the friend who taught him to enjoy Shakespeare and Robert Burns.

In these pages Kelso is witness to the pageant of American history from 1831 to the present time. His story treats of the Blackhawk War ; the Mexican War and the acquisition of Texas ; the Civil War and the Spanish American War, and the World War, with their effects upon liberty and the purity of government. All is told in rapid and epigrammatic dialogue between characters like Douglas, Lincoln, Kit Carson, Brigham Young and very many more ; all in the plot and shifting scenes of the epic story. The drift of American life is revealed ; the changing and bewildered character of the people is shown, the whole being pointed with humour and satire and with crucial analysis. In Jack Kelso's story lies an epic of American life.

Mr. Master's style is reflected by the following which opens the First Act :—

ACT ONE.

SCENE I.—On the hill overlooking the Turledge Mill on the Sangamon River. Jack Kelso lies stretched on the grass under the shadow of an oak tree. At his side is a fishing pole with line and hook. He has been reading Shakespeare, but the book has fallen from his hands. He is plucking at the grass, at times looking up at the clouds, at others down at the river, or across it to the grassy slopes and hills beyond, where here and there the log cabins of the early settlers can be seen in the bright sunlight.

KELSO [*in meditation*].

I wonder if the wise and great,
The winners, doers of high estate,
Have idiot moments separate
Of nothingness from fullest life,
Pauses and rests that like a knife
Sever the hours and leave between
Mere emptiness or dull routine?
Somehow this Shakespeare seems to me
A soul from folly always free;
A poet, actor, whom no hour
Robbed of his usefulness and power.
Duncan is in his grave! How clear
These wonder words fall on the ear.
For such a man the seasons flew
With always something sweet and new.
He saw, he felt and then expressed,
He had no clutter of the breast.
But I, poor devil, cannot link
My dreams together. When I think
The visions vanish like a cloud,
And I sit staring, empty browed.
Then nothingness of life is mine.
Duncan is in his grave! Resign
The quest, Jack Kelso—better you
Were in your grave forever, too.
You can do nothing but sweat and grunt,
And cut the wood and fish and hunt,
And wander lonely with an eye
That takes more from the summer sky,
The hills and river than you use,
Or understand. To have a Muse
So tongue-tied is to be accursed.
To-morrow and to-morrow. At first
And for the moment I forgot
These words that speak the common lot
Of blankness and of weariness.
It is an idiot's tale and less.
How did I come here to this place,
And how this weary fate embrace?
I have a gift of prophecy,
And what is coming can foresee.
Those so endowed themselves are prone
To help construct what is foreshown.

A scientific treatise is supplied by the title poem of Mark Van Doren's *Now the Sky*.

How long have standing men—by such a stone
As this I watch from on this windless night—
Beheld Arcturus, golden and alone,
Guiding Antares and the Snake aright.

The Scales were up when not an Arab walked
On sand that soon was paved with names of stars;
Boötes herded, and the Giant stalked
Past the curved Dragon, contemplating wars.

How many an open eye, bedight with dew,
Over the sleeping flowers has drawn them down—
Andromeda, and Berenice's few
Dim tresses that shall ever flee the Crown.

From such a rock whence greybeards long ago,
Forgetting it beneath them, heard the lyre,
I watch. But there is something now we know
Confusing all they saw with misty fire.

For them a hundred pictures on a slate.
For us no slate, and not a hand that draws.
For them a pasture-dome wherefrom the gate
Of Cancer led the Lion through its claws.

For them a frosty window, painted over,
Nightly, with flower faces in a ring—
Daisies dancing up, and clouds of clover
Scenting the after way, and phlox to fling

Thin petals left and right till morning lifted.
For us no shapely flame in all the dark;
For us a million embers that have drifted
Since the first fire, and not a sign to mark

Where anything shall end, or which shall go
With which until they both shall die to grey.
For watchers once a changeless face to know;
For us cold eyes that turn henceforth away.

They saw each constellation take its hour
Of triumph overhead, before it started
Down the broad West, whereon the death of power
Was written by the Ram, and nightly charted.

The Eagle and the Swan, that sailed so long,
Floating upon white wings the Arrow missed,

Tilted at midnight, plunging with a song
Earthward, and—as they sank—deep Hydra hissed.

Leo had long been growling in his lair
When Pegasus neighed softly in the East,
Rising upon a wind that blew his hair
Freshly, until Aquarius increased.

The stream he aimed against the Fish's mouth,
And all the stars were wet with silent rain.
The Hyades came weeping, and the South
Sent mist to soothe the Sisters in their pain.

These things they witnessed, the Orion, climbing
Fiercely with those two Dogs announcing Fall;
Then Winter, with Aldebaran loud-chiming,
Baiting the frozen Bull, that turned to call.

The Bears to warm his anger. These they knew,
And knew the seasons with them, Spring and Spring—
Counting the dozen signs the finger drew
That swung the inconstant Sun around the Ring.

Slow Jupiter proceeded as they planned,
Lingering among the Twelve in stately turn;
They touched the breasts of Venus, where the hand
Of Mars's fiery love had been to burn.

The sky was then a room, with people going
Faithfully to and fro, and beasts enchained.
The sky was then a midnight wastrel, throwing
Riches away; and still the purse remained.

But now the sky is broken, door by door,
Strangers in the room obscure the hosts.
The meadow is not guarded any more
By watchers coming lonely to their posts.

The animals are never to be named
That swarm beyond our company of old—
Stragglers from the herd, that we had tamed
Unknowing the recesses of the fold.

Those were no heroes whom we once addressed—
Hercules, Orion, and the Twins.
Unwounded, they were running from the rest
Far there where only now the war begins.

There is a game for players still to play,
Pretending that the board was never lost.
But still the painted counters will decay,
And knowledge sit alone to count the cost.

Glenn Ward Dresbach's *Star-Dust* is another welcome contribution by this poet-painter. One hundred and fourteen pages of radiant tints born of sky and sun and moon and earth and sea charm the readers, as in " The Grand Canyon " :—

The vast façades of soared stone now drip
With jewelled mist of the invisible tide
Of air, and flame-tipped pinnacles and spires
Now based on clouded splendours, seem to slip
Into the rippled blue robes of the sky
And stand where only silence dares abide. . . .

* * *

Of wonder ! We grow dizzy with such wine . . .
And we are haunted more than we may know
While wind comes smoothing footsteps from this dust.
Sands stir in whispers where the shadow plods
Besides us. We have been here . . . We must go . . .
This is the last trail of the departed gods.

Another colourful etching is " Sky Garden " :—

Below these azure walls where breaks
  Dawn's wave of bloom of toss and shine,
A valley, flowered with blue lakes
  Upon a trailing silver vine,
Drifts onward and becomes as one
With flowered space and rising sun.

Far northward, over all the heights,
  Emerges now a crystal glow—
A peak has soared from swirling lights
  To lift its vasty bloom of snow
Asserting unity on high
With snowy cloud and upper sky.

Eyes wander back to trade the lands
  For something born of human powers . . .
A fawn with daisied hide now stands
  To look, then drifts away in flowers.
A bird, whose wings like petals float,
Drifts, fading on a silver note.

The closing poem is " Song," which has a lilt and fascination :—

Who roams in a haunted castle,
  Where glories are dusting down,
May think he hears on a stairway
  A sibilant silken gown.

Who listens long to a sea shell,
  But never sailed the sea,
May think he hears the echoes
  Of its cruel threnody.

But who shall dare to listen,
  The day when dreams depart,
To winds . . . in the empty castle,
  Or to the sea . . . in his heart !

A Vermont landscape is drawn in the following opening poem, " Spring Pools," from Robert Frost's *West-Running Brook* :—

These pools, that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods—
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
These flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.

Edwin Arlington Robinson's *Sonnets* strikes a sombre note, which is reflected throughout the book. The sonnet " New England," is typical.

Here where the wind is always north-north-east
And children learn to walk on frozen toes,
Wonder begets an envy of all those
Who boil elsewhere with such a lyric yeast
Of love that you will hear them at a feast
Where demons would appeal for some repose,
Still clamoring where the chalice overflows
And crying wildest who have drunk the least.

Passion is here a soilure of the wits,
We're told, and Love a cross for them to bear ;

Joy shivers in the corner where she knits
And Conscience always has the rocking-chair,
Cheerful as when she tortured into fits
The first cat that was ever killed by Care.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

NOTES FROM COLORADO

The generous reception given to the second edition of *Evenings with Colorado Poets*, upon its appearance late in 1926, has resulted in a third and revised edition, published by the original compilers, Drs. Francis S. Kinder and F. Clarence Spencer, of Denver.

The new volume is in two sections; the first contains the work of poets before 1900, and the last 148 pages are given to their successors. "It was believed," say the editors in their preface, "that this listing in two chronological groups would aid the reader in fixing the time of the poets, and, fortunately for our plan, there are only a few who seem to belong to both groups. There was a period around 1900 when verse writing was in less favour."

The revival of poetic interest and poetic vigour among Colorado writers is evidenced by the splendid contributions found in the second part of this new book, and the biographical notes appended help to make it one of value not only locally but nationally, at least.

The frontispiece is a portrait of Helen Hunt Jackson (H.H.), and among the other portraits are those of Nellie Burget Miller, poet laureate of the State, Clyde Robertson, past president of the Colorado Branch of the League of American Pen Women, Elizabeth Kuskulis, present president of that Branch, and Heloise M. B. Hawkins, president of the Poetry Society of Colorado.

This Poetry Society is a fairly new organization, Mrs. Hawkins being its third president. Her predecessors were Jean Milne Gower and John Robert Henderson, both of whom are well represented in the book under discussion. Mr. Henderson's rondeau, "She Touched the Strings," is frequently quoted, and among Mrs. Gower's best things is "The Vagabond":—

O you who are dreaming of things that may be,
  Forgetting the things that are,
Who see through clouds of mystery
  The gleam of a friendly star,
Who hear in happy wild bird's singing
    Theme for a symphony,
And find in a wayside bluebell swinging
The keynote of ecstasy—
  O you who have found in life such cadence
  And have rhythmed your soul to its measure,
You have chosen the highways of Heaven for vagrance
  And savoured its infinite treasure.

Those who have not given the subject especial attention will be surprised to learn of the large number of nationally known writers who have made Colorado their homes for longer or shorter periods of time—Helen Hunt Jackson, whom Emerson regarded as the greatest of American poets, and Eugene Field, known everywhere for his tender poems of childhood and his colourful mining camp ballads, are among these. Bishop Robert McIntyre gained his popularity as a poet as well as a gifted pulpit orator, while in Colorado. Virginia Donaghé McClurg, Prof. Ernest Whitney, Stanley Wood and Cy Warman are other outstanding names among those listed in the first section of *Evenings with Colorado Poets*. Portions of Mrs. McClurg's sonnet to Colorado are familiar to many verse lovers. It is worth memorizing in its entirety :—

O " Coloured Land ! " beneath a turquoise sky,—
Sun-kissed from dazzling peaks to opal plains,—
What pulses throb within thy silver veins,
What forces strive in thee for mastery !
The Manitou here dwelt in days gone by
In crystal springs, to cleanse all mortal stains ;
Here the swart Spaniard strove for golden gains ;
Lone hunters saw thy virgin purity.

Now Plenty's garners gild the quiet fields,
And marts are swayed by olive-sceptered peace ;
To mighty multitudes her wealth she yields.
As shifting seasons pass and years increase ;
For fair " Columbia," bending towards the West,
Now wears this crimson rose upon her breast.

" Dusk in the Desert," by Mary Sylvester Paden, is a picture seen by one who sought the healing balm of Colorado's climate :—

I drink, O Desert, this breath of thine
As an eager Sybarite quaffs his wine ;
And I lift my weary lids to gaze
Wide-eyed and glad, o'er thy boundless ways,
To where I can step from thy outmost rim
Into the skylands, grey and dim.

Another traveller from the east on the same quest, Ernest Whitney, apostrophized Colorado as " Land of the undimmed heaven ! "

Whether native born or guests for a time only, poets have invariably sung of the scenic grandeurs of this State—of which there is no lack. Besides the awe-inspiring places, such as the Mount of the Holy Cross, The Canyon of the Grande, the Garden of the Gods and Pike's Peak, there are the miles and miles of mountain ranges with their deep

canyons, magnificent waterfalls and high peaks covered with snow, yet, in many cases, not inaccessible by highway, trail or train. There are flat-topped foothills called mesas, small mountains in themselves, and there are what appear to be " the boundless prairies." Many in each of these groups of poets sing of at least one of Nature's gifts to Colorado. An entire book of such songs might have been compiled had not it been the desire of the editors to introduce as great a variety of theme in the work as their material would permit. Referring to their success in making a book worth while, President George Norlin, of the University of Colorado, says, " I am delighted with it," and Judge Louis Wyborn Cunningham of Colorado Springs, formerly of the State Supreme Courts, says, " I should like to see a copy of it in every Colorado home." Nor, indeed, were the appreciations limited to the residents of Colorado, for librarians from many other states, when ordering copies of the book, referred to it in terms that satisfied the compilers that their work had not been wasted. From the second half of *Evenings with Colorado Poets* I shall quote a part of " The Prairie Wife," as representing the work of Nellie Burget Miller used here. Nothing for this purpose was taken from her recent volume *In Eastern Bowls*.

> With gnarled hands folded on her idle hoe
> She stands and stares until the train has slipped
> Over the grade and out of sight. What dreams
> Of sudden flight does it arouse ? What hope
> Is left her of escape ? One with the soil
> She seems, her shapeless garments' faded brown
> Serves for protective colouring, and Life
> Has broken her to suit its mystic urge
> As she, in turn, breaks up the patient clod.

Other poets, officers and outstanding members of the different poetry groups of the State, including the Chapter of the Poetry Society, who appear in the second section of this volume of 265 pages, besides those already mentioned, are Maude Freeman Osborne, Katherine Prescott Bemis, Lisbeth G. Fish, Anna Hansen Hayes, Addie Cropsey Hudson, Josie Lydon, Edna Davis Romig and Horace Castle. Pearl Riggs Crouch lives in Hereford. Her " Threshing," included here, first appeared in POETRY OF TO-DAY. Mrs. Romig is connected with the University of Colorado, at Boulder. Her " In the Garden " is a re-print from THE POETRY REVIEW, and also from Braithwaite's *Anthology* for 1926. Milton S. Rose is the head of the English Department of Colorado College in Colorado Springs. From the five pages assigned to his work, I take " Pike's Peak " as a representative bit :—

> The blight of time is on that giant tor
> That dreamed a form too vast for life's confines,

Too far above his fellows, and found death.
Death, but not dissolution. The years are thin
That beat on those cold sunny precipices
Bereft of beauty, though sublime of might,
An exalted loneliness that will not pass
But look to the dead moon forevermore.

Here death has laid his devastating touch ;
One hand caught here from the polar vastnesses,
Whence, creeping his silent fingers ever down,
Those dull, amoebic fingers of the ice,
Gathering inexorably the world in grasp,
He comes to meet this mountain desolate.

Dorothy Stott Shaw of Colorado Springs demonstrates a true poetic craftsmanship. Unfortunately, her contributions to this volume are too long to quote. I shall content myself with the concluding lines of " On the Fossil Ridge " :—

I am hill-born and have not sailed the sea ;
Only the crag and cliff have known me well ;
Here at my feet the sea has come to me—
I gather here a shell !

Not because it is in any way the best of a group of sonnets and other poems by Lilian White Spencer, shall I give you her " Pueblo Legend," but because it is generally illustrative of her style :—

The ancient tribes, when they and earth were new,
Dwelt on lush emerald fields set in a frame
Of silver streams, and hunted willing game ;
Fat with unending feasts : for Awanyu,
Plumed serpent-god of water sources, threw
His rivers down to them . . . till they became
Indifferent, and ceased to bless his name.
Then, to the deeps of heaven he withdrew,

Long must dry lips of thirsty deserts pray
Before the rain's cool cup is theirs to take.
Still, Awanyu, who is the Milky Way,
Unpardoning, swims down his dark sky lake.
Did padres know who at San Filipe
Carved round a font the image of a snake ?

Anna Spencer Twitchell is the pen name of Mrs. D. S. Person, who made Colorado Springs her home for ten years, during which most of her poems were written. She appears here with a portrait and ten

short poems taken from her book, *Star and Grass*. One quatrain illustrating that title is :

As old I am as that white, throbbing star,
Young as those herbs of Spring that quickly pass—
My soul goes up the pathway of the star,
My feet go down the pathway of the grass.

Jaime Sexton Holme is also represented by poems that first appeared in her recent volume, *The Star Gatherer*. Among these is " Escape," beginning :—

Under that spray of rose,
Waxen and fair,
Lies the white shell of me—
Lips, eyes and hair.
Why do you look for me ?
I am not there.
* * *
That is my chrysalis,
That is not I !
Always it troubled me
I could not fly.
How could I dream 'twas so
Simple to die ?

Mrs. Clyde Robertson is well represented in these pages, beginning with her winning Ballad for the international prize contest offered through The Poetry Review by J. Roberts Foster in 1925, " The Woman in the Wagon." Lilian White Spencer is here with a dozen poems ; from them we will read " Grand Canyon " :—

Aeons ago the river's fangs struck deep
At mesa lands that once upheld the sea
Now, great gashed cliffs expose red agony
As black teeth gnaw forever through their steep
And bleeding palisades, whose crimsons sweep
Blue heaven. Grey-faced precipices flee
Up from dark wounding toward infinity ;
Furlongs in air the sundered chasms leap.

Out of that forest-crowned abyss, one day,
The red folk came and when night is unfurled
For the last time (so ancient legends say)
On Canyon moon and sunrise and the world,
Back to their happy underground will go
Down the long trail, Hopi and Navajo.

It has been said that " silence is golden." Of late, the poets have made good use of the word. In this collection Isabel Sherrick Wardell

(deceased 1926) is represented by a poem called " Silence," which first appeared in her book entitled *Star Dust;* Mrs. Miller begins a song with :—

I bring you silence, my Beloved,
Song is too poor a thing;

Edla Park Peck sings of " The Silent Guests " and Harry McGuire (born in Denver in 1904, and probably the youngest writer represented in *Evenings with Colorado Poets*), has twelve lines dedicated to " Silence "

There is a silence that the poet sings,
Pressing his fingers to the lyre, lest it speak;
There is an interlude of silvery song
Still as an Alpine peak.

Still as a meadow heavy with the dew,
Haunted with words that never can be said,
Silence that more betokens poesy
Than tombs betoken dead.

Mute music, like the echo from illimitable throats:
Atomic clouds, and worlds, and interstitial blue.
These creatures sing though they are dumb—
My canticle is silence, too.

Hattie Horner Louthan is the author of several books of verse. For this collection, selections were made from her *Thoughts Adrift* and *Songs of Ila*. Mrs. Louthan is connected with the University of Denver.

" Portraits " best represents the work of Thomas Hornsby Ferrill of Denver,

I, as a boy in school—a wondering child,
An hour from her and home, behind my book
Would watch, and think and think—how was it that she smiled.
My mother's eyes—I can't tell how they look.

And you, my lover, in this portrait here,
I see your features framed in pleasant grace,
Yet hours and miles have made you far, my dear:
Your picture, yes—but I know not your face.

For various reasons not necessary to enumerate here, nothing was included in *Evenings with Colorado Poets* from the pens of Margaret Tod Ritter of Colorado Springs, Caroline Lawrence Dier and Lucile Dupré of Denver, each of whom has had published at least one book of poems, but, generally speaking, this volume of verse is satisfactory as an illustration of the best work of Colorado poets, and, as such, it

is a credit to its compilers. I said in an article on Colorado Poetry, which appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW for July—August, 1924, "If we may not say that Colorado has arrived, may not we say that Colorado is on the way?" With the appearance of this Anthology and of the several volumes of verse that have appeared during these intervening years, may not we NOW say that Colorado *has arrived?*

The Echo Anthology of Verse, published in Denver, compares very favourably with any sectional collection of poems published during 1927. It was ready just in time for the holiday trade. It contains seventy-five poems by sixty-two authors, and these seventy-five have appeared in *The Echo Magazine*, of Denver, during the past two years. The anthology is edited by David Raffelock, who is also editor of the magazine, and in his preface he says:—

"It is noteworthy that the western environment has exerted a strong influence on many of the poets. Some of the essential characteristics of the vast West with its massive mountains, its romantic history, its sharp colours and its simplicity, have dominated the feelings of poets here and there, so that the West becomes not a mere subject for verse, but is the very essence of its mood or thought."

A wide variety of poems, free verse and the standard forms, were selected for this anthology. It is not a survey of western verse, which would have resulted in a preponderance of cowboy poems, nor is it an anthology of western verse, but of verse coming from the West. "The West has produced notable singers," says Mr. Raffelock.

In this volume are found many of the names listed in the last half of *Evenings with Colorado Poets*, and, in addition, there are poems written by those living farther west than Colorado—for instance, Idella Purnell, editor of *Palms*, now published on the coast, and Ethel Romig Fuller, whose home is also near the Pacific. Letitia Brace, formerly of Denver, contributes "Betrayal":—

I was content with age while Winter stayed
  Iron-bound and grey;
Against the storm-dull skies my hearth-fire flung
  A spell so gay—

And then—alas—one night young April came
  In Winter's place,
And I am fierce and young and full of pain
  With looking on her face!

Neita Carey, of Goodrich, Colorado, a member of the Poetry Society, is represented by "Two Women and a Lady." Elizabeth Kuskulis, of Denver, and also a member of this Society, has here a sonnet called "Going":—

I will slip out so softly while the dawn
Is still asleep behind earth's purple rim;

Before one nacre shaft has cleft the dim
Sweet silence, or one tiny star grows wan.
I must not wait till midnight has withdrawn
A drop of darkness from the flowing brim
Of that deep, skyey bowl where planets swim,
As in a sea, and sow their glittering spawn.

With midnight-indigo I'll blind my eyes
And muffle all the little sounds of earth,
Which I have loved. The path of this emprise—
What matter if men call it death or birth?
'Twere royal sport to ride on such a track—
But let no twittering dawn-bird call me back!

I Shall Fare Forth is a slender volume containing about forty poems and an essay on Friendship, written by Eugene Dimon Preston, whose home was in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The greater portion of these were written during the winter of 1918 and 1919, while the poet was in France, waiting for his opportunity to return to America. Such a one is " Twigs " :—

The aged women, withered and gnarled
As the dry, twisted fagots under which they bend,
In the twilight furtively creep
From the groves of the vast estates
Whose owners and keepers are absent.

Yet, with all its pathos, it seems fitting
They should be the gleaners
Of the dead, broken branches torn from vigorous trees
By the Autumn winds;

They are so like their burdens—
Crisp, brown twigs of humanity
Who have served their purpose.

Another was written for Memorial Day of 1922, as the Ex-Service man remembered comrades in another land over whom were growing the poppies and the wheat : " May : Lady of Poppies " :—

After the Winter rain and linnets come again
  Singing, as once they sang in days of yore;
Verdant the fields of wheat, the meadows fair and sweet;
  Smiling, the Springtime welcomes May once more.

Lady of Poppies! May catches the warmth of day,
  Breath of the wind, and flame of the sunset's glow;

These, and the clay and the dew, she moulds into form anew,
Mindful of men who loved them long ago.

Heedless of other days, thoughtless we speed our ways
Weary of toil, with turbulent souls adrift;
May has remembered all who hear no more her call,
Who sleep in dreamless rest beneath her gift.

Soft as the wind that blows, invisibly she goes
Flinging her scarlet poppies o'er the land;
Sweet challenger that we keep faith with memory
And those who lie where slender crosses stand.

ELIZABETH PRESTON HENDERSON.

Colorado was the first of the States to gather a group of members for The Poetry Society of Great Britain, and Mrs. E. Preston Henderson served as Chairman of that Chapter of workers. Mrs. Henderson, who surveys the present state of poetry in Colorado, has "got the habit" of appearing in anthologies, as attested by the City Sonnets, *Echo*, *Evenings with Colorado Poets* and *Songs from the Stepladder*.

WALT WHITMAN

IN unworn tracts where desert and wilderness lie,
On vast waters, on steppe and mountain, deep in the mine,
Over the width of the earth, the sea's spread and the face of the sky,
Wherever, imperious, the call of the wild is heard and men combine
And wrest from the height and depth the ancient needs,
There, unruly spirit—imperishable—you abide.

Poet of vagabond airs, dreamer of dreams, sower of lusty weeds,
Yours the grand endeavour to know—naked heart and eyed—
What is Truth, what Freedom, what men are. Athwart the sun you stride
To other worlds, yet looking back.
There is no forgetting.
Walt Whitman, singing exultant psalms of pulsing blood,
Heart, and the primal motive, the soul, the pride begetting,
Boldly proclaiming the whole and the sum of men, and each his manlihood,
You gave men a living faith unquenchable: You pressed your seal
Deep in the burning heart of our nascent commonweal.

FREDERICK KEMP.

A STUDY OF ENGLISH RHYME

II. SHELLEY

IN a study of Shelley's rhymes, the following analysis will be found approximately correct for the rhyme-words most frequently employed by him under each letter of the alphabet. Not more than ten rhyme-words are given under each letter, unless two or more tie; and no rhyme-word is included unless it is used at least ten times.

A

Air, 116; Away, 97; Again, 67; Alone, 37; Around, 34; Are, 32; All, 29; Atmosphere, 27; Above, 25; Among, 22.

B

Be, 143; Below, 39; Birth, 38; Breast, 37; Blood, 35; Bright, 34; Bear (verb), 32; Brow, 28; Blast, (noun), 27; Brain, 27.

C

Came, 56; Child, 37; Cold, 33; Cloud, 19; Care (noun), 17; Cave, 16; Caves, 16; Cry (noun), 16; Cheek, 15; Come, 15; Creep, 15.

D

Day, 133; Delight (noun), 51; Dew, 51; Dead (noun), 44; Death, 44; Divine, 43; Despair, 39; Dead (adj.), 38; Deep (noun), 37; Down (adv.), 34; Dream (noun), 34.

E

Eyes, 69; Earth, 65; Ever, 38; Eye, 22; Eternity, 17; Even (noun), 14; Error, 12; Emotion, 11.

F

Free, 65; Fair, 59; Flame, 57; Feet, 40; Fear (noun), 37; Flight, 32; Flow (verb), 28; Flowers (noun, plur.), 28; Fame, 24; Fell (pret.), 24; Fire, 24.

G

Gone, 45; Grave (noun), 37; Grew, 31; Gold (noun), 29; Green (adj.), 19; Ground, 19; Gray, 17; Gladness, 16; Go, 16; Grass, 15.

H

Heaven, 47; Heart, 41; Hair, 36; Home, 36; He, 30; Head, 30; Here, 29; High (adv. phrase), 23; Hue, 22; Honrs, 21.

I

It, 24; I, 26; Ill (noun), 15; Is, 11; Isle, 10; Italy, 10.

K

Know (verb), 36; Keep (verb), 23; Knew, 20; Known, 16; Kind (noun), 13; Know (infin.), 13.

L

Light, 89; Lay (pret.), 48; Love (abstract noun), 43; Lie (verb), 32; Land, 25; Lot, 21; Liberty, 17; Love (proper abstract noun), 15; Law, 14; Life, 13; Lips, 13; Long (adv.), 13; Lost (part.), 13.

M

Me, 115; Mind, 39; Moon, 34; Mine (pron.), 31; Move (verb),

31; More (adv.), 30; Men, 29; Multitude, 29; Might (noun), 27; Motion, 24.

N

Night, 94; New, 73; Not, 53; Name, 30; Nest, 18; Noon, 17; Near (adv.), 15; New (adj.), 13; Never, 11.

O

One (adj.), 43; Own (adj.), 29; Old (adj.), 22; Ocean, 17; Old (noun), 11; On (adv.), 11; Other, 10.

P

Pain (noun), 37; Pale (adj.), 32; Power (noun), 28; Prey (noun), 25; Passed (pret.), 23; Plain (noun), 21; Paradise, 20; Pride (noun), 18; Pass (verb), 16; Past (part.), 12; Prime (noun), 12.

Q

Queen, 15.

R

Rain, 27; River, 18; Rest, 17; Ray, 15.

S

Sea, 101; Sky, 72; Sleep (noun), 63; Sound (noun), 47; Shore, 39; Sun, 38; See (infin.), 35; Stream (noun), 34; Song, 32; Sweet, 31.

T

There, 115; Thee, 106; Thought, 58; Throne, 33; They, 32; Tears (noun, plur.), 29; Tomb, 26; Then, 23; Tone, 23; Thine, 21; Thou, 21.

U

Us, 10.

V

Vale, 11; Vast, 11; Vain (adj.), 10.

W

Way, 54; Woe, 36; Wind (noun), 34; Well (adv.), 30; Wings (noun, plur.), 29; Will (noun), 25; Wave (noun), 23; Waves (noun, plur.), 22; Wild, 21; Were (pret.), 20.

Y

Yet, 26; Years, 24; You, 23; Ye, 14; Year, 14; Youth (abstract noun), 11.

If Shelley's rhyme-words are compared with Wordsworth's rhyme-words, the following table may be constructed:—

	Wordsworth.	*Shelley.*	*Rhymes Common.*
A	298	255	120
B	393	312	185
C	477	337	163
D	416	314	154
E	255	162	79
F	333	300	162
G	218	158	83

H	233	196	96
I	140	159	45
J	27	17	7
K	44	47	24
L	222	208	100
M	280	258	118
N	81	61	39
O	113	86	33
P	352	272	130
Q	16	23	6
R	394	301	144
S	822	688	356
T	345	288	137
U	154	163	49
V	69	56	27
W	291	274	133
Y	25	30	14
Z	3	1	1
	6001	4967	2405

It will be seen by a comparison of the rhyme-words of each poet, that the rhyme-words common to the two are, under almost every letter, approximately half those used by Shelley alone. That is, Shelley's technique, as far as rhyme-words are concerned, is identical with Wordsworth's to the degree of about one-half. Shelley, as a disciple of Wordsworth—it would scarcely be too much to say—owes about half his inspiration to that master. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his technique is indebted to the elder poet in about the same degree.

The first twenty rhyme-words used by Shelley are, in order: Be, 143; Day, 133; Air, 116; Me, 115; There, 115; Thee, 106; Sea, 101; Away, 97; Night, 94; Light, 89; Now, 73; Sky, 72; Eyes, 69; Again, 67; Earth, 65; Free, 65; Sleep (noun), 63; Fair, 59; Thought, 58; Flame, 57.

Of these, eight are common to the first twenty rhyme-words used by Wordsworth.

Of striking divergencies in the number of times a rhyme-word is employed by Wordsworth and Shelley, may be noted the following. "Place" (noun) is used by Wordsworth 82 times, as against Shelley's 5; "Praise" (noun) by Wordsworth 33 times to Shelley's 3; "Say" (verb) by Wordsworth 53 times to Shelley's 3; "Sight" (noun) by Wordsworth 115 times to Shelley's 13. The cause for these divergencies of usage may be determined by "some other wiser man"; but I venture to think that Shelley's use of "Now" (73 times to Wordsworth's 23) and of "There" (115 times to Wordsworth's 72) shows an immaturity of art in the younger poet. It is an expletive

use of rhyme, to stop a gap. Wordsworth's versification is, on the whole, the more flawless.

Of the incorrect rhymes by Shelley, the following may be noted: *Poems*, 1821. xvii. 10, 12, "accept not" . . . "reject not"; *Poems*, 1822. ix. 51, 2. "leaves" . . "peace!" *Cyclops*, 523. "Pursue thee" . . . "dewy." *Magico*, Sc. ii. 21, 22. "reject it" . . . "accept it." In addition to these, some critics may regard as incorrect: *Poems*, 1822. xi. 1, 2, "islet" . . . "violet"; while *Mercury* 676, 678, 680 "Jupiter" . . . "lyre" . . . "familiar" appears problematic. A defective rhyme may be noted; Letter to Maria Gisborne, 94, 95 "logarithms," "Sims,"; while a peculiarity of rhyme is found, *Magico* iii. 62, 4, "lovest" . . . "sophist."

Of words for which no corresponding rhyme is found I have noted: (1) in rhymed couplets, *Julian*, 211, "spoke." *Letter*, 231, "shell." *Poems*, 1820, II, 135, "Where." (2) In poems of disparate rhymes: *Rosalind*, 409, "spring," 650, "pain"; 734, "Youth"; 752, "lay." *Poems*, 1816, III, 65, "spread"; 113, "world." *Poems*, 1821, XXIV, 19, "scythe."

"Aphrodite" is rhymed by Shelley three times—each time to "delight." There is no instance of "Amphitrite" in Shelley as a rhyme-word. Wordsworth, it may be remembered, rhymes "Amphitrite" with "light." In *Poems*, 1818, VI, 97, "Amphitrite" appears with the final "i" accented:

"In Amphitrite's destined halls."

"Wind," as a noun, is used by Shelley 34 times—each time with a long i. Swinburne's use of the short i in "wind," therefore, is not taken from his master, Shelley. "Melancholy" as a proper noun is used once: *Revolt* V, 2186. The rhyme-words used with it are "Folly" and "holy." "Melancholy" as an adjective is used once: *Peter Bell* VI, 616. The rhyme-words employed with it have each the short o—"folly," "Molly." The Greek has a short o.

I venture now to quote three passages from writers on rhyme, which appear to illustrate various usages of rhyme to be noted in Shelley.

The first is from the note on rhyme appended by John Davidson to his *Holiday and Other Poems*:

"A second quotation to show that a word can be used as a rhyme to itself:

"From the Forest I come whereabout
The silences, harvested, throng—
Autumnal, the silences throng.
No throstle, no blackbird devout
As the seraphin mingle their song,
With perfume entangle the light
And powder the woodland with pearl,
Nor usher the star-stricken night
With incense and melody rare;

The song-thrush devout and the merle
No longer enrapture the air
With concord of ruby and pearl."—*Bartlemas.*

A tabor leads off upon " about " ; a single clarigold rings in the first " throng " ; and two others immediately take up the burden an octave lower in the second " throng " ; " devout " and " song " bring in the psaltery and the anome ; " light," " night," " rare," "air," add to these sackbuts and timbrels ; with the first " pearl " the dulcimer sounds ; the syrinx replies in " merle " ; the second " pearl " is a double dulcimer ; and the whole fantastic orchestra fills the evening with richly braided sound.

Without affirming that Shelley had any such orchestral theory in support of his versification, it may be suggested that he experimented with the effects of using a word as a rhyme to itself. Take, for example, *Rosalind and Helen*, 130-141 :

" But there is stillness now :
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now :
The snake is in his cave asleep ;
The birds are on the branches dreaming :
Only the shadows creep :
Only the glow-worm is gleaming ;
Only the owls and the nightingales
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,
And grey shades gather in the woods ;
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now."

This repetition of " now " as a rhyme-word suggests the omnipresence of the fleeting Now. In *Julian and Maddalo*, 508-510 :

" the air
Closes upon my accents, as despair
Upon my heart—let death upon despair ! "

the re-iteration of the rhyme marks the monotone of despair.

The second passage is from F. W. H. Myers' paper on " Victor Hugo " in the *Nineteenth Century* of May, 1879 :

" It was to French versification that the Romanticists gave their most serious attention. . . . Their mastery of old French poetry led to a real re-discovery of disused metrical effects, and a real invention of new ones. And it is in these matters that M. Hugo was most truly the heir of this literary revolution ; his naturally fine ear was taught and stimulated by the technical discussions which surrounded his early years. . . .

" First as to rhyme. Frenchmen, as we know, designate as *poor rhymes* most of such rhymes as English verse allows—namely, colloca-

tions of similar syllables beginning with different consonants, as *page* and *rage*, *nuit* and *instruit*. They give the name of *rich rhymes* to collocations of similar syllables beginning with the name consonant, as *éperdument* and *firmament*, *vile* and *ville*, which in English would not count as rhymes at all. . . . This so-called *richness* of rhyme is found in M. Hugo's poems in wonderful profusion. In a page of his taken at random, I find eleven rich rhymes to three poor ones; in a page of Racine taken at random, seven rich rhymes and seven poor ones."

Shelley appears to affect the use of the *rich* rhyme. "Delight" (noun) is used by him as a rhyme-word 51 times—17 times to "light," once to "daylight." So "recollections" and "collections" (*Peter Bell*, V, 428 . . . 430); "relieved" . . . "unrelieved" (*Poems*, 1821, XVI, 51, 53). Without attempting to give an exhaustive list, the following usages of identical rhyme may be noted :—

Revolt, IV, 1707, 10. "ever" . . . "ever"; V, 1823, 5, "shed" . . . "shed"; 2143, 5 "me" . . . "me"; VI, 2457, 60, "ever" . . . "ever"; IX, 3573, 6, "flame" . . . "flame"; 3771, 4, "thee" . . . "thee"; X, 3829, 31, "came" . . . "came"; 4165, 8, "slow" . . . "slow"; 4181, 4, "still" . . . "still"; XI, 4352, 5, "made" . . . "made"; 4435, 8, "there" . . . "there"; XII, 4802, 5, "suspended" . . . "suspended." *Rosalind*, 96, 101, "solitude" . . . "solitude"; 178, 192, "her" . . . "her"; 655, 665, "see" . . . "see"; 1010, 1024, "flow" . . . "flow"; 1120, 1162, "song!" . . . "song"; 1104, 1166, "strain" . . . "strain." *Prom.* II, iii, 61, 97, "throne" . . . "throne"; IV, 49, 54, "gladness" . . . "gladness." *Witch*, 236, 8, "me" . . . "me." *Adon.* 380, 5, "bear" . . . "bear." *Poems*, 1816, II, 81, 2, "thee," . . . "thee." *Poems*, 1820, II, 37, 38, "other," . . . "other." V, 125, 131, "deep" . . . "deep." XIV, 3, 10, "year" . . . "year"; 14, 21, "year" . . . "year." *Poems*, 1821, II, 30, 35, "soon" . . . "soon!" *Mercury*, 367, 9, "know" . . . "know." *Faust* ii, 129, 132, "shattered" . . . "shattered."

For a quasi-identical rhyme, compare *Revolt* I, 629, 630, "thrown," "throne."

So far from English not admitting *rich* rhymes, as Myers argues, these seem to constitute one of the charms of Shelley's versification, e.g. :

> "It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
> It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!"
> (*Poems*, 1820. I, i, 76, 77.)

The third passage is from Prof. Nichol's *English Composition* (p. 116). "Rhyming syllables," he says, "must have the strong accent. Weak terminations such as 'ty,' 'ly,' 'ing,' should not be made to bear the weight of the single rhyme."

In Shelley's rhymes weak terminations are very common. In "ty" he has in all 115, of the type :—

" Lo, the sun floats up the sky
Like thought-winged Liberty."
(*Poems*, 1818, VI, 206, 7.)

In " ly " he has 118, of the type :—

" On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally."
(*Ibid*, 45, 6.)

In " ing " he has 32, of the type :—

" From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming."

In —" ings " he has 11 ; in—" est," 8 ; in—" eth," 2 ; in —" ed," 19, of the type :—

" Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated ! "
(*Poems*, 1820, I, iii. 64, 5.)

The technical term for such rhymes may be " weak " ; but I believe them to constitute a great beauty of Shelley's versification, if not its predominant characteristic. The light ending marks a delicacy of thought and of technique :—

" But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be."
(*Ibid*, ii. 49-52.)

Let the reader take *Lines written among the Euganean Hills* ; and, in addition to the weak terminations specified, he will find also adverbs like " on," " no " ; pronouns like " her," " it," " he " ; and nouns ending in " ny " and " dy," as " Tyranny," " Agony," " Lombardy." I might, in fact, have counted the rhyme-words ending in " y " used by Shelley ; but will defer that enumeration to a more exhaustive treatise.

Note.—The text used is the *Oxford Shelley* (1925). The Juvenilia and the passages marked " cancelled " have been excluded. I have numbered the poems grouped under each year for myself.

T. E. CASSON.

Miss Barbara Young, believing there exists an insistent demand for a permanent gathering place of those who love, read, and write poetry, has searched for such a place and has had the courage to acquire " Poetry House," at 12 East 10th Street, New York—a dignified old residence with tradition and atmosphere, having been the home for many years of the David B. Ogden family. After its dedication a weekly evening of poetry, free to all lovers of fine literature, will be conducted, and on a Wednesday evening there will be a charge of $1.00 admission when a notable poet is engaged to read.

THE POETRY LOVERS' LIBRARY

If you read *Papers on Shelley, Wordsworth and Others*, by J. A. Chapman (Oxford University Press, 6s.) you will see afresh the value and meaning of poetry. The author's standards of literary criticism are as fine as those of Matthew Arnold—to whom he acknowledges his debt—and he writes clearly, expressing himself without obscure terms. The greatest poetry, he says, is that which by imagery, choice and combination of words presents in a line or two a whole bouquet of ideas, " the essence of one thing being shown in the light of another," as for instance :—

" daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ;"

This can be done only by inspiration ; without such a revelation of Arnold's " true sense " of things the loveliest collection of words will not be great poetry.

" What thing unto mine ear
Would'st thou convey,—what secret thing,
O wandering water ever whispering ?
Surely thy speech shall be of her,
Thou water, O thou whispering wanderer,
What message dost thou bring ? "

But there is much good poetry which seldom or never touches the greatest, and in the light of the author's previous remarks his papers on Walt Whitman, Richard Middleton, and Dr. Edward Thompson, whose work he studies particularly closely, are both penetrating and appreciative. He stresses the need for music in poetry : " One suspects," he says, " that some of our contemporaries are a little afraid to be melodious." The critics, according to Mr. Chapman, should read contemporary authors more carefully and know at least some of them as we all know our Keats or Coleridge, then perhaps a poet would not have to wait generations for a true appreciation of his work. I agree that deeper criticism is necessary if we are to rescue what is good in contemporary writing from complete obliteration, but surely time alone can give its true proportion to any work of art.

Included in this book is a paper on Francis Thompson's *Shelley*, an acute and amusing study of Coleridge, with the tale of his gloriously irrelevant lecture on *Romeo and Juliet*, and an illuminating essay on Wordsworth. This author asserts that Wordsworth's poetry may be fully enjoyed without a knowledge of any of his theories and that the best of Wordsworth is not his nature poetry, but those rare and splendid passages in which he takes as subject the mind of man.

Altogether this is a first-class piece of critical work and should be read by everyone interested in poetry, whether as reader, writer, or critic ; here is honesty and here encouragement.

Literary history is, for the most part, founded upon the actual poems, plays and books produced from time to time and handed down to us each with its accumulation of honour and glory. How they appealed to popular taste when they first appeared we often do not know—some individual opinions are left to us here and there, but it is not until we come to Elizabethan England that we have any body of contemporary criticism large enough to give an idea of the general impression made by a new literary production. Mr. E. E. Kellett in *The Whirligig of Taste* (Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.) regards taste as the helpless prey of outside events, and his book is a historical survey of them. Here are two of the numerous examples he can cite to uphold his theory.

In 427 the Sicilian rhetorician, Gorgias, visited Athens, then a small community exceedingly interested in literary matters; his ornamental style of speaking was new to the Athenians, who were used to the simpler methods of Pericles, but soon the whole of their rhetoric and even their prose and poetry showed his influence and acquired the same tricks of artificial decoration as his oratory. Again—in the early eighteenth century, Louis XIV, first monarch of Europe, had filled his court with poets, critics and playwrights, and alongside France's military supremacy grew her literary supremacy. French literature was vastly popular in England: the plays of Molière and Corneille were translated and appeared on the London stage, prefaced by Dryden himself; everywhere French poems were read and studied as models for the polite versifier. But, turn to the end of the century—French literature of all sorts is taboo—we are at war with France.

Such examples do show that taste is very strongly influenced by outside circumstances, but Mr. Kellett altogether ignores that sense of beauty in man which has always kept a fixed point about which the "whirligig of taste" revolves; he, in fact, denies the existence of any absolute standards of beauty. To him Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare are as leaves blown in the wind of popular taste. "If a book," he says, "satisfies its readers it is so far good . . . we may, as a convenient brachyology, call it bad: but what we mean, or ought to mean, is that it is bad to us." And again: "Immortality is no more a credit to the authors than the survival of their tombstones."

But how can Mr. Kellett account for the consensus of opinion which throughout the ages has agreed that Homer, for example, is good poetry, without granting that there are certain permanent standards of beauty in verse which do not alter with the variations of taste?

Again and again, in his anxiety to be a disinterested critic, this writer makes questionable statements.

> "A mere book in itself is nothing; it is the product not of one man, but of its author, its readers, a thousand vague impulses from this wind of feeling and that; and it is to be judged as part and parcel of all these influences."

Is any book nothing in itself? Despite all that it may owe to the influences of its age is it not something which the personality of its

author and that alone could have produced. In another place Mr. Kellett asserts that there is no objective beauty or ugliness in one word more than in another, but has he never read R. L. Stevenson on the relative values of vowel sounds, or discovered the differences between such words as "Philadelphia," "Totnes," "translucent" and "transparent"?

Road Rhymes and The Soul of Erin (Wards, Woodgrange Press, 2s. 6d.), a new book of verse by Maureen Michael, contains plenty of swing and colour and songs of places far apart as Delft and Waterford. The poems are simple but full of imagination and the author can create atmosphere, especially that of Ireland, with a touch.

"In that voice I heard the Shannon flow
Measured, stately, in its ageless coursing through the Golden Vale,
Water indolently lapping brown boats moored at old Kinsale."

When Miss Michael experiments with complicated rhyming schemes she is not very successful and not only loses the music but obscures the meaning. *The Soul of Erin* is a short one-act play; it is badly constructed but the individual lines are sometimes lovely, and the resounding Celtic names used particularly well.

Mr. Theodore Dreiser's *Moods* (Constable 15s.) would surely have been far better expressed in the course of one of his novels than published separately in the form of free verse. His reflections are generally pessimistic, sometimes original, and occasionally beautiful. Mr. Dreiser has "cadenced" them, but for the most part they remain prose; what else is this?

"The drag of life,
Its dulness.
We do not get what we want.
We drift and falter, making compromises with ourselves.
We wonder why nothing happens,
And then some day something does happen:
We fall sick,
Or we fall in love,
Or we lose our work—
Or we die."

One of the advantages of cutting such reflections—and they are not all so commonplace—into short lengths, is the opportunity this form gives for catching the eye of the reader, inventories are listed thus, and Mr. Dreiser excels in inventories, here is one from "The Weaver":

"There is, of course,
The world we see or 'know.'
'Apartments.'
Factories

Tall walls.
People going to business
Forms.
Machinery.
Trains.
Trees.
The grass.
Cattle.
Flowers.
Clouds.
Beauty.
And then—
This other world."

Repetition can be used very effectively in this sort of verse, especially if the word repeated has a line to itself each time it occurs. In the poem "Evensong," for example, the sound of the bell is like a bass accompaniment to the rest of the words.

"Dong!

Is it the voice of a spirit that floats outward
Over the rippling river
With its white, clean stones
A river as shallow
As it is gay?

Dong!

Is it evening's own voice
Full of the pathos
Of the death of day?

Dong!

It is the word of a spirit

Dong!

Winging its way

Dong!

Over farmland cottages and barns,

Dong!

The yellow wheat,
The russet oats
The bladed green corn,
And the patchwork counterpanes
Of purple and grey
Where grass and wildflowers
Mingle."

This passage, like many others, shows that the author has a painter's eye, he catches most vividly the look of things, not only their colour but their shape, though of course so much was evident from his novels.

A comparison might be drawn between these " moods " and Logan Pearsall Smith's " Trivia," but it would be much to the detriment of the former, which are often heavy despite their form ; while " Trivia " are marvellously light and their wisdom pointed with inimitable wit. Surely a man's moods are not for publication unless true or lovely in form or substance, and half of these are neither.

The few poems and other literary remains which Anthony Abbott, who died a year ago at the age of eighteen, left behind him have been collected into a small book, *Prose Pieces and Poems* (Gollancz, 6s.) as a memorial to the author. Most of the poetry is experimental, but it shows a keen imaginative power, a grasp of the possibilities of language and a strong sense of colour. Much of it is purely artificial, but more perfectly rounded than the usual raw product of an Oxford freshman. It would be interesting to know how far Anthony Abbott was influenced by the classics : his translation from Theocritus is one of the loveliest things in the book and there is a Greek atmosphere about much of his prose. The early poems, songs about the sights and sounds of outdoor life are delightfully simple and rhythmical, yet without the unevenness usual in the work of very young writers. They are, I think, more successful than the later poems when he is trying new forms and reaching out into an enormous world crammed with absorbing interests and amazing paradoxes. It is the same with his prose pieces, though in the last few entries he leaves the entrancing mists of imagery and decoration for surer ground. Here is an example of what he can do, he is speaking of the Irish peasants :—

> " . . . Then take them in the land whence they have come. An ancient Ireland of a Renaissance red and gold in colour. An Ireland, the dim citadel of Pagan and Christian paradise, a land soaked in myths and sacred lore, its hills and lanes tramped by fairy horseman, its rocks and caverns filled with giants."

If this young poet had lived he must have gone on to great things and it is difficult to believe that he journeyed so far towards a command of words in eighteen years. He tried to live poetry as well as to write it and his idea of what that involved was an extraordinarily fine one.

It is now so long since Dr. A. S. Way produced the first book of his translation of the *Aeneid* of Virgil, that we regret to say that we have quite forgotten what he said in the preface—if he wrote one. The third volume has now appeared (Macmillan, 5s.) consisting of the text and translation of Books VII to IX. Now whatever Dr. Way said in his preface in defence of his method, we do not approve of this peculiar translation. Those who set about " doing " Virgil into English verse are always excusing themselves by stating that they are attempting to find the perfect medium for the expression of the

hexameters of the original, and we imagine that this is the aim of Dr. Way. . We feel, however, that it would be difficult to find any version more awkward or irritating to the general reader than this, which has the appearance of being a literal translation roughly turned into casual verse—not in the least worthy of such a scholar as we know Dr. Way to be. Having the advantage of not knowing the excuses proffered by the preface, we are in a position to say frankly that we do not like his rendering at all.

If you feel bitter about this post-war world you may find that writing poor verse sweetens you, but is there any excuse for publishing it? Mr. W. J. Lamb has evidently found one for "The Monument and Other Poems" (C. W. Daniel Company, 7s. 6d.), though if he thinks that cheap sarcasm is going to solve any of the gigantic problems he attacks, he is wrong, however sincere. If there is any spell in these verses it is that of incantation, the sonnets occasionally rise to the level of poetry, but most of the versification is extraordinarily weak.

Mr. Ronald Petrie, the compiler of the Stratford Anthology, which Messrs. Harrap are publishing, is devoting the whole of his royalty—which should be a handsome sum—to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Rebuilding and Endowment Fund, which is now in the happy position of having secured national and international attention and support.

* * *

The Barcinski Academy of Speech Training and Dramatic Art makes an earnest contribution to the serious attention now being given to these subjects which must result in the raising of the standard of taste as well as of performance. An attempt to elucidate John Drinkwater's *The Storm* was the least successful of a series of recent public performances. The enthusiastic director has arranged an ambitious programme for next season.

If, as Miss Sybil Thorndike said, in adjudicating at the Third National Festival of Community Drama, held under the auspices of the British Drama League at Wyndham's Theatre, the revival of the Theatre in England is to come from amateurs (and from the standard of acting and production on this occasion it seems as if she may be right) may we make to these amateur actors and producers the suggestion made recently to our verse-speakers—that they should be a little more cheerful about it? An atmosphere of depression was inclined to hang over the less satisfactory performances at the festival, and the three plays which were successful, the winning company from Liverpool, and the two from Bristol and Edinburgh which tied for the second place, were particularly noticeable for the reason that they managed to get a spirit of optimism and gaiety into their representations. All three productions were lively, cheerful, and therefore acceptable.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Some Remarks on Half Rhyme

A dark outlook on life has become normal, and we no longer take this into account in our adjudication. But the spring of the year of life is no time for being dismal, and we shall be glad to see the waning of this pessimism. The fondness for weeping and moaning seems to have become an obsession with premium competitors, and, though a few have responded to the spirit of the season, there is no appreciable change to report. The premium is again divided between three competitors—K. O'Neill Bailey, M. E. Pyne, and John Silver. The main reason for this award is that these entries have something definite to say, and say it in a concentrated clear manner without indulgence in the ecstatic melancholy which we have come to expect, and of which we complained, apparently with some effect, in the last number. Those complaints by the way, seem to have been partly misunderstood; if we quote a line here and there, it is with no personal designs, but rather to point out some tendency or mode of expression which we consider harmful. As a result of those remarks (or so we like to think), we are able this month to publish a " commended " list of over forty names.

Very Highly Commended.
E. M. Fison,
I. Ormsby,
M. Toovey,
F. Whitworth,
A. D. L. Wilson.

Highly Commended.
J. W. Anderson,
L. Harper,
D. E. Greville,
J. Purdie,
P. Rimmer,
Sister Maris Stella.

Commended.
E. Alcock,
E. Arden,
V. Arlett,
E. Binnington,
H. A. Burden,
J. Cannings,
V. Talbot-Crosbie,
S. Dobson,
E. Doorne,
J. M. Dougall,
E. Dowson,
A. G. Eddison,
G. W. Eustace,
B. Eve,
I. F. Groom,
E. J. Harrison,
R. Harvey,
M. Head,
I. M. James,
B. H. A. Jones,
I. Kemsley,
F. Kemp,
E. L. Kinloch,
W. K. Lewis,
M. Redcliffe Mackay,
G. E. Merrick,
A. Nichols,
E. Nolan,
M. Rowland,
A. J. G. Russell,
D. Thomas,
E. M. Walker,
B. C. Woodbury,
H. Wyatt.

We would like to notice more sustained artistry in these contributions. Even our more experienced veterans occasionally fail to eliminate an ugly phrase, an inappropriate word, a feeble climax, a jarring image. Or they do not keep their end up or leave it up in mid-air. We concede something to inspiration but after all good versification is very largely a matter of taking pains.

We welcome the recognition of the need for the Assessment Board contained in the remarks with which Miss Naomi Royde-Smith, who has had great experience in such matters, begins a review article:

"The prophet who, in a mood of sustained querulousness, rebuked his God because so many seeds rotted in the ground for one that took root and multiplied, was in his turn rebuked. 'Thou comest far short,' said the Lord, 'that thou shouldst be able to love my creature more than I; therefore ask thou no more questions concerning the multitude of them that perish.' And to the reviewer of poetry who, faced with the innumerable output of verse, makes much the same complaint against unfruitful effort, the same baffling answer might be given. For the production of one vital poem is sometimes a divine accident, but more often the reward of a hopeful industry in the production of multitudes of them that perish. Out of twenty books of verse on the reviewer's table two only may be considerable as wholes, but, here and there amongst the negligible pages, a living poem may be found, and it is only the expectation of finding such an one that keeps the critical faculty from corrosion."

Not one book of verse should go unexamined, but what a task and what special equipment necessary!

These remarks remind us, by the way, we have been asked to name three or four exquisite "little poems" that have appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW in recent years. Will readers help us by naming their preferences? Postcards will be welcomed or a note with their next MSS. for premium consideration.

HALF-RHYME

Mr. G. W. Eustace expands his recent comment on half-rhymes into the following interesting observations which will be appreciated by all within the Poet's Fellowship:

It would be difficult to say at what period what is generally known as half-rhyme first appeared in English poetry. Probably it was not consciously introduced, but arose automatically as the result of varieties of pronunciation among different classes and in different parts of the country. To-day, the peasant in one county rhymes "warmer" with "farmer," in another with "firmer," the middle classes in both with "former," and the "educated" with what approximates very closely to "bomber." In each of the instances given a full rhyme results, but one which becomes a half-rhyme when it loses its environment.

Chaucer recognized the widely differing dialects in use in England in his day and also the change effected by the passage of time in the pronunciation and the meaning of words :

" Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
With-inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thinketh hem ; and yet they spake hem so . . . " (1)

and,

" And for ther is so greet diversitee
In English and in wryting of our tonge,
So preye I god that none miswryte thee,
Ne thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.
And red wher-so thou be, or elles songe,
That thou be understonde I god beseche !
But yet to purpos of my rather speche." (2)

In using the term " rather " (former, older) he is here obviously referring to the East Midland dialect which he used and which he succeeded in establishing as the standard language of England for the ensuing three hundred years :

" But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly
On metres and on ryming craftily,
Hath seyd hem in swich English as he can
Of olde tyme. . . . " (3)

In the standard language which he established, Chaucer not only included terms peculiar to the Northern, Southern, West Midland and Kentish dialects but also retained several forms of spelling of the same word and by this means secured in his poems full rhymes as occasion demanded, e.g. " stoon " and " ston," " goon " and " gon," " anoon " and " anon," " bin " and " ben," " blak " and " blake," " ageyn " and " agayn," " gret " and " greet," " gode " and " good," " deth " and " deeth " etc., etc.

He does not appear to have employed half-rhyme ; the few instances in which it occurs, e.g., " Palamon " with " goon," " anon " with " stoon," " goon " with " John " being negligible in number and probably corruptions in the text. This, possibly, is true also of the rhymes used by the poets of the Elizabethan era. By the seventeenth century, however, half-rhyme had become firmly established and has been used since by all the great poets.

Rhyme is a restriction imposed on the poet, a salutary restriction according to Dryden. Rhyme also serves to bind the lines together. Its main function, however, is as an aid to memory, hence it is a concession for the benefit of the reader or listener. Its use is governed

(1) *Troilus and Criseyde*, bk. 2, *l.* 22. (2) *Ib.* bk. 5, *l.* 1793. (3) Intro. to *Man of Law's Prologue*, *l.* 43.

by rules, rules approved by the only possible court of appeal; the educated ear. What Johnson says with regard to metre may well be applied to rhyme and especially to half-rhyme :—

> " To write verse, is to dispose syllables and sounds harmonically by some known and settled rule ; a rule, however, lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without a breach of order, and to relieve the ear without disappointing it."

Half-rhyme substitutes similitude for identity. Thus it differs from simple assonance, a good example of which is supplied by the well-known Irish poem, " The Groves of Blarney " :—

" The groves of Blarney
They look so charming
All by the purling
Of sweet silent brooks :
And bank'd with posies
That spontaneous grow there
Planted in order
In the sweet Rock-close."

Objection has been taken to the use of half-rhyme on the ground that it disappoints the ear and is an offence to it. But is this true ? In the following lines from Dryden's *Eleonora* there are four instances of half-rhyme :—

" Though all these rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow space of life confined,
The figure was with full perfection crown'd
Though not so large an orb, as truly round :
As when in glory, through the public *place*,
The spoils of conquer'd nations *pass*,
And but one day for triumph was allow'd
The consul was constrain'd his pomp to crowd ;
And so the swift procession hurried *on*,
That all, though not distinctly, might be *shown* ;
So, in the straiten'd bounds of life confined,
She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind :
And multitudes of virtues pass'd along ;
Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be seen, and then make *room*
For greater multitudes that were to *come*.
Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away ;
Moments were precious in so short a stay.
The haste of Heaven to have her was so *great*,
That some were single acts, though each *complete* ;
And every act stood ready to repeat."

Can it be truly said that any one of these half-rhymes is a disappointment or an offence to the ear? Rather may it be affirmed that they provide just that very relief to the ear which eases the sameness of the rhymed couplet and, in doing so, invigorates the attention of the reader or listener. It is of interest to note that, if written and pronounced in the English of Chaucer, every one of these half-rhymes would form a full rhyme.

To many a poet, no doubt, the half-rhyme proved a convenience. This, however, is quite another thing from regarding it as poetic licence, an easing of the fetters, a concession to the poet. Masters of rhyme, e.g., Milton, Dryden, Pope, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Browning, Tennyson, etc., could, without doubt, have found full rhymes suited to their purpose on all occasions. Byron's ear may not have been as sensitive as that of either Shelley or Keats, but not even in his case, any more than in that of the others mentioned, can it be fairly advanced that inability to find full rhymes induced a disregard for what disappointed or offended the ear.

Is the use of half-rhyme subject to any special rules? All the great English poets since Chaucer, or at least subsequent to the Elizabethan era, have used it; but in none has that use risen as high as ten per cent. of the total rhymes employed. Hence it would seem that, consciously or not, a strict limitation in frequency of use was observed. Many words which to-day form half-rhymes make full rhymes in the East Midland dialect established by Chaucer as the standard language. A very recent example is furnished in Uloth's fine poem, "The Roundhead." In the tenth stanza "was" forms a half-rhyme with "pass," but, pronounced as in Chaucer's day a full rhyme. Should the half-rhyme then be limited to words which in Chaucer's English formed full rhymes? Obviously not, if the educated ear is to retain its position as the final court of appeal.

Possibly the true function of the half-rhyme is to act as a slight check, somewhat similar to the pause which a wave makes before it sweeps forward on its course, a check which does not detract from but which rather gives added force to the succeeding undulation, but a check which, if too frequently or irregularly applied would result in the inharmony of a choppy sea. Viewed from this standpoint, the half-rhyme should be regarded as complementary and not simply supplementary to the full rhyme. No poem has yet appeared where this function has been assigned to it. This, however, does not prove that to employ it consciously for a definite purpose would not be an improvement on the present haphazard method, just as alliteration might regain much of its undoubted value if the rules which governed its use prior to the introduction of the end rhyme were re-established and observed.

"A New Poetic Renaissance?"

Mr. E. B. Osborn, whose versatility has adorned the literary and

other pages of *The Morning Post* for many years, concludes a recent "Vision of English Poetry" with the following paragraph on the present and future:

The greater poets of the pre-war generation have passed away or write little, if at all. Thomas Hardy, a poet not without art, but without artifice, who bore up the burden of modernity beyond his eightieth year, is a heart of dust with his compeers. Rudyard Kipling, the real father of the modern school which finds romance, vivid as blood, in the heart of the commonplace, seldom takes up his pen cut from an eagle's plume. A. E. Housman, who is an English Horace with a modern gift of ironic humour, is silent, and W. B. Yeats has shut his magic casements for ever, and William Watson has ceased to carve word-cameos in the grand style. Of the "Georgians" who were collected by "E.M." in the intervals of serving as Winston Churchill's intellectual valet, the majority must be classed as experimentalists. Their work lacks memorableness, nor does it always grant us that "balance of pleasure" which Wordsworth rightly expected even of the most tragical poem. Some of the more extreme experimentalists must needs fail, since they are not only possessed by a cosmical grievance against things as they are, but, what must be fatal, ignore the genius of the language which must be their medium. Yet all of them, even the failures, are preparing the way for a new poetic renaissance by extending the range of poetic subjects and superseding the old outworn poetic diction by a study of the subtle and infinitely varied music of colloquial speech. Sooner than we expect, perhaps, the parcelled and impeded river will cease to seem a "foil'd circuitous wanderer" and will reveal a "luminous home of waters" far wider and deeper than any Aral Sea.

* * *

The handling of the MSS. received for the Lewis "Music" premium has been beset with difficulties. Few of the lyrics lend themselves to musical treatment, this essential nature of the poems has been overlooked or not realised. We have sought the assistance of composers without arriving at agreement on the quality of the verse, and are not yet in a position to announce the awards.

* * *

We are glad to take this opportunity of announcing that a young member of The Poets' Fellowship, Mr. F. Whitworth, who is not yet twenty years of age, has had the distinction of being selected by the Polish Legation as the young English poet worthy to translate into English a volume of poems by Casimir Wierzynski, who was awarded the prize for poetry at the Olympic games. An article on the work of this Polish writer, and a version (not by Mr. Whitworth) of his poem to Amundsen appeared in the last issue of THE POETRY REVIEW. We are proud that so young a member of our Fellowship should be honoured in this way, and we are anxious for the success of this his first book, which will appear during June.

Miss Edith Evans on Verse-Speaking

Miss Edith Evans in awarding the Poetry Society's Gold Medal for Verse-Speaking at the Blackfriars Theatre on March 12th, at which she was a most sympathetic and thorough judge, creating a delightful atmosphere, said :—

"It has been very difficult from some points of view but quite simple and easy from others, to make the awards to-day. One reason why it has not been so easy is that the candidates should essentially be speaking poetry, but they gave a lot of pieces which were not particularly poetical. I do think, if I may be allowed to say so, that you should chose a purely poetical selection and not dramatic, but those who did speak poetry did it very well.

"The first medal is awarded to Miss Elspeth Duxbury (London); it gave me the greatest possible pleasure to listen to her; she has the very marked quality of taking herself away from her poem and just letting the poem come through and speak itself, which I think is the supreme test.

"The next medal goes to Miss Gladys Weston (Cape Town); speaking her first piece charmingly, with, perhaps, a little too much dramatic feeling, she more than justified her choice in the second when she appeared to remove herself entirely from the poem and let the poem speak itself.

"We think a third medal should go to Miss Josephine Fyffe (London); here, perhaps, is a poetic speaker who has not yet come into her own. At the moment she is more an actress than a speaker of poetry, but she brought out very beautifully the poetry in the things she spoke. She is a little too slow in her style, but while handicapping herself in her first poem by speaking too slowly, she still maintained very clearly the rhythm of the poem. She taxes her own breathing resources very much by speaking too highly.

"A fourth medallist is Miss Joan White (Kingston); she has a cultured voice and very charming sense of the beauty of which she is speaking. There is a delightful intelligence about her speaking not always noted in reciters. She could take just a little more trouble to get her voice a little fuller and stronger.

"Most of the others seriously handicapped themselves by their pieces. They were, in many cases, dramatic pieces and should be spoken by people who were acting them as opposed to speaking of poetry. There is a tendency among some of the candidates to use too much variety of voice—peak speaking. For instance, a long poem spoken on a very high level becomes a little tiring because we feel the speaker is taxing her powers of endurance. Poetry is a sort of flowing, more level thing and requires a more level voice than dramatic speaking. It should possess and transfigure the speaker, who should not show any sense of being outside the poem, a detached and clever interpreter and entertainer. In consequence they would find the purest poetry the best and simplest for their purposes, the least tempting to affectations and archness and artificial impressions."

A POETS' CALENDAR

May

1. Addison, b. 1672.
2. G. Wither, d. 1667.
3. Hood, d. 1845.
5. Marx, b. 1818.
7. Browning, b. 1812.
8. Dante, b. 1265.
9. Schiller, d. 1805.
11. Catherine Cockburn, d. 1749.
12. Rossetti, b. 1828.
13. Daudet, b. 1840.
15. Balfe, b. 1808.
18. Meredith, d. 1909.
19. Boswell, d. 1795.
20. Dürer, b. 1471.
21. Warton, d. 1790.
22. Pope, b. 1688.
23. Hood, b. 1799.
25. Emerson, b. 1803; Lytton, b. 1803.
26. Pepys, d. 1703.
27. Calvin, d. 1564.
28. Moore, b. 1780.
29. W. S. Gilbert, d. 1911.
30. Pope, d. 1744; Whitman, d. 1819.
31. Charlotte Brontë, d. 1855.

June

1. Marlowe, d. 1593.
3. Cobden, b. 1805.
5. Weber, d. 1826.
6. Corneille, b. 1606.
7. Warburton, d. 1779.
8. Reade, b. 1814.
9. Dickens, d. 1870.
10. Robert Buchanan, d. 1901.
11. Roger Bacon, d. 1294; Wither, b. 1588; Jonson, b. 1574.
12. Kingsley, b. 1819.
13. Madame D'Arblay, b. 1752.
15. Campbell, d. 1844.
16. Butler, d. 1752.
17. Addison, d. 1719; Barham, d. 1845; Burne Jones, d. 1898.
18. Philips, d. 1749.
21. Aytoun, b. 1813; Skelton, d. 1529.
22. Catherine Philips, d. 1664.
23. Akenside, d. 1770.
24. Dumas, b. 1803.
26. G. White, d. 1793.
27. John Murray, d. 1843.
28. Rousseau, b. 1712.
29. E. B. Browning, d. 1861.
30. Roscoe, d. 1831.

" The pleasant, pithy and profitable works of Master Skelton, Poet Laureate, nowe collected and newly published. . . ."

On the 21st of June, 1529—four hundred years ago—died John Skelton, who, as the title page we quote indicates, was poet laureate to Henry VII. Born in Norfolk in 1460, after a university education he became a civil servant. He attained his position as Poet Laureate when only thirty years old, and eight years after that he was tutor to King Henry VIII, then Duke of York. He took holy orders, was patronised by Wolsey, accordingly praised him in his verse, disgraced himself, was no longer patronised by Wolsey, and accordingly abused him roundly. Whether he fulfilled his poetical duties well or not it is hard to say, but he is a true representative of an age distinguished for its satirical wit and coarseness. He was capable, however, of charming and delicate verse.

J. K. HUYSMANS AS A POET.

THE personality of Joris Karl Huysmans stands out sharply outlined from the background of French symbolist literature on account of his outlook on the spiritual side of life, of the special character of his tendencies in art criticism, above all of the originality and lyric quality of his style. His work sums up the aspirations of two periods of French literature and art: impressionistic realism and mystic symbolism. The poetical element of his prose appears in the vivid brilliancy of his metaphorical expression, the strange charm of which depends on the rare associative power of his mind, every shape and colour bringing to his memory a remote likeness. This quality of discovering and unfolding analogies between widely different objects is the gift of the true poetic soul; a common mind stops at similarities between things strictly related to each other. His prose is a texture of metaphors; his phrase, with all its perspicuity and force, is full of images, personifications, symbols. He finds unexpected counterparts to a sensation and expresses them with lyrical splendour, with metaphors that, apparently far-fetched, odd, or even bizarre, are precise and true.

Poetry does not differ from prose only through metrical form, but through the inmost substance, the imagery and glow of passion, the fervour exalting the language to music. Lyrical qualities are evident in Sir Thomas Browne, in Carlyle. Huysmans's prose, richly embroidered with figures, exhibits high imaginative powers. In descriptive passages he employs a rhythmical, coloured phrase, at once musical and picturesque, which reminds us of Flaubert in *Hérodiade* and *St. Julien l'Hospitalier* and of Pater. There is a poetical glamour in his similes. "The cathedral was frail and pale like those Virgins of Roger Van der Weyden, who are so thread-like and slender that they would fly away were they not, in some manner, held back here below by the burden of their trailing brocades."[1]

He is master of a prose laden with subtle suggestion and of a haunting beauty. Although using the loose rhythm

[1] *La Cathédrale*, Paris. Plon-Nourrit, 1808, *p.* 163.

of prose instead of the fixed cadences of metre, he bestows upon his phrase that purely formal beauty which is characteristic of the highest lyric poetry, and which springs from a skilful arrangement of the sounds of words[1] ; and there is a rushing rhythm in his sentences, each phrase being punctuated by strong stresses, by subtly calculated succession of accents. He is master of an analytical, searching style, and of a language that has an intimate fitness to portray his peculiar psychological states ; with extreme accuracy he endeavours to fix sensations in words with absolute sincerity and truth, to draw ideal and real objects with a firm and precise outline, and we are struck by the limpidity both of his outward and his inward vision ; dreams and material things are portrayed with the same clearness and effectiveness. His highly imaginative prose often attains the intensity of poetry through a combination of strict realism and ardent fancy ; especially in his descriptive passages we have a constant sense of lyric elevation, of the "enthusiasm" that belongs to verse rather than to prose. But his use of verbal sounds is peculiar ; he does not avoid —on the contrary, is fond of—a certain harshness in combining words, and his periods usually end with a monosyllabic word of a hard, sharp sound.

Simple, everyday life is made into poetry by his merely transcribing it into pictorial words, by a kind of magic ; he inserts original, striking metaphors while describing the commonest things, never resorting to tropes for mere ornament, but to render as forcibly as possible his sensation or emotion ; and we cannot but admire his skill in finding out the right simile to convey with utmost precision a shade of colour or the curve of a line. He is, before all things, a poetical painter, idealising reality, always looking for a higher beauty ; like every true poet, he spiritualises the sensation, infusing into it an intellectual element. Like Rodenbach and Baudelaire he tries to understand the meaning of things—"le langage des fleurs et des choses

[1] Cf. *Mallarmé :* "L'œuvre pure implique la disposition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots, par le heurt de leur inégalité mobilisés ; ils s'allument de reflets réciproques comme une virtuelle traînée de feux sur des pierreries." (*Crise de Vers*, 246.)

muettes "—the expression of colours and gems, as if they were human faces—the moods of landscapes, as if they were souls.[1] His work is a poetical representation of the world; the sphere of reality is enclosed within the many-tinted sphere of dreams; he has the poet's gift to perceive the essential character of things, so that material objects—lit by the soul's radiance—become at once more vividly sensuous and more ideal; his descriptive power raises material loveliness into an imaginary world, shedding upon it the beauty of lyric emotion. His aim is to transform the world about him into a spiritual universe; he looks in life and art for what is transcendental. He says of the cathedral of Chartres in a peculiar effect of light: "The cathedral spiritualized itself, made itself all soul, all prayer, soaring to God;—slender, light, almost weightless, it was the most magnificent expression of the beauty that sets itself free of its earthly dross—of a beauty making itself seraphic."[2]

An ardent student of art and literature, he is not unlike Pater in his love of what is supremely refined in poetry and life; like Pater, Huysmans is of Flemish descent, with painters among his ancestors,[3] and, like the author of *Marius the Epicurean* and *Imaginary Portraits*, a wonderful painter in words and a poet in prose.

His metaphors are borrowed to a large extent from the works of man rather than from nature; he often recurs to artificial objects to describe natural things,[4] so that nature itself takes on a kind of artificiality in his portraiture of it.

[1] See the precious stones in Moreau's picture of Herodias, and the symbolic significance of the gems in Recceswinthus' crown in the Cluny Museum.

[2] *La Cathédrale*, 163.

[3] Joris Karl Huysmans was born in Paris in 1848; on his father's side his family was from the Dutch town of Breda; his mother was of French descent; both his father and grandfather were painters, and among his ancestors are several artists, one of whom especially, Cornelis Huysmans (b. at Antwerp in 1648), attained eminence; from his Flemish blood he inherited the possession of a pictorial gift, his love of still-life painting, of the fantastic and grotesque, and his tendency to the secluded, intense life in house and church.

[4] See, for instance, *L'Oblat*, 73: "(In the garden towards the end of May) one crushed the fallen blossoms of the horsechestnut trees and the pods of laburnums; one walked thus as on *a rug, woven* with white and pink, and speckled with gold drops."

In *A Rebours* he is the singer of Artifice, of factitious impressions and illusory emotions; not true life, but a makeshift for life, is the ideal of Des Esseintes; flowers of rubber and sheet-iron are by him preferred to real ones; illusion is set above real beauty and truth. This is to him a way to evade reality; "everywhere, out of the world"—Hood's line chosen by Baudelaire as a title to the last of his *Poèmes en Prose*—might be Huysmans's motto. Throughout his work we descry his desire to substitute artificial impressions to real ones. Des Esseintes turns from real existence to art, which is to him the only refuge from life's sorrows and distress, and from art works he draws exclusively his spiritual food; yet art is not sufficient to sustain the soul, and the magnificence of dreams evoked by paintings and poems darkens into despair. A parallel tragedy is enacted in Tennyson's *Palace of Art;* the soul, enclosed by strange visions, a prisoner in an enchanted island, haunted by sweet music and fairy sights, lacks the nourishing bread of true life. In vain he builds up beautiful schemes of correspondences between colours and moods, perfumes and landscapes; in vain, with imaginative subtlety, he descries gemlike tints flash out of a melody. Art cannot satisfy the immortal aspirations of the soul. And the mystic thought first reaches him in this very book, as the reflections of the sunlit outer ocean penetrate into a sea cave; *A Rebours* marks the turning-point of his life; here it is that he first hears the imperious call of the Voice divine, of Grace. Before, the true light in his mind had been darkened by the corruption of the senses as the glistening of a stained-glass window is stifled under layers of dust and grime. His life, that had been a pool covered with the iridescence of rottenness, flows down into a chasm—*Là-bas*—and issues as a waterfall among drifting long veils of white spray-smoke; below is the thunder of the abyss, and above the rainbow of Hope.

Therefore we find in all his work an inward harmony, produced by the sincere reflection of the writer's soul; the writer's spirit always looms out under various disguises; he is essentially a lyric poet as he always sings his

own emotions, and he shows his lyric character in the construction and matter of his tales. The heroes of his novels are but himself, and their structure is always the same; there is a central personage—who is the reflection of the author, a self-portrait—leading a contemplative, solitary life, surrounded by works of art responsive to his mood; but for a few insignificant people, who offer a pretext to discussion, and exposition of ideas in dialogic form, he is quite alone; and we follow, step by step, the unique, wonderful development of his spiritual flower.

His aim is to awake in us the perception of a mystical beauty in art works, to make us feel a religious trance in the Gregorian plain-chant, in mediaval hymns, in the paintings of Flemish Primitives, in the rough vigour of Claus Sluter's statues, in the soaring *élan* of Gothic churches. He endeavours to note the finest vibrations of the mind before the landscapes of the Impressionists, the portraits of Whistler and the Parisian views of Raffaelli, the allegorical fancies of Moreau and Redon, and to find out the sibylline, suggestive charm of symbolic poetry, to extract from Mallarmé's and Verlaine's poems their latent meaning, their essence, their very soul. His ideal world is poetical inasmuch as it is the reflection of a world of impassioned magnificence: the realm of Art; art works are transfigured when reflected in a poet's soul, and their subjects, mirrored in his glowing style, acquire a singular lustre. Art is the vivifying presence in all the pages of Huysmans, as a divine idea of beauty clothed in visible forms—Art, the wanderer, coming down to us trailing on her mantle's edge the dust of gems swept from paradisical floors.

His leading instinct is the search for rare and strange beauty; his ideal is certainly no obvious one, as he decidedly prefers a sophisticated, complex, *fardée* loveliness to simple, natural splendour; a certain quaintness is required to satisfy his desire; what is enigmatic being peculiarly attractive to him, he fondly lingers on the intricacies of symbolic art; a craving for artificial beauty lies at the root of all his studies in literature and art. Yet he looks in life and poetry for the odd and the bizarre not to startle the

reader, but owing to his innate curiosity of rare emotions, a spontaneous bias of his mind.

Every beautiful thing—colour, scent, sound—awakes in him a special mood; a passionate explorer of strange gardens in his keen, eager search for exquisite emotions, Huysmans, in his refining upon sensations, in his selecting the subtlest shades of feeling, is the poet of the rare and the exceptional. Des Esseintes, whose perceptions are sharpened by a morbid sensitiveness, owns the soul of a poet; weaving fancies about art works, he yields completely to their influence; and the very spirit of poetry is in his yearning to escape from reality, to ascend from a poem or a picture to the dream evoked by it; he finds in art a supernatural element, the reflection of a world beyond the world.

He asserts the supremacy of the spiritual element in life and art; his soul throws its light on nature, so that his whole work is aglow with a mystic fire. He looks for art works haunted by echoes from regions beyond the earth, so that they lead him to God; art, a good enchantress, takes him, with a kind of white magic, to Faith. Looking for some higher, eternal reality, he finds it at last in mystic love. His work shows a constant and consistent ascent from matter to soul; from the study of reality in his first novels he rises to a yearning to the infinite; in *En Route*, *L'Oblat*, even in the last chapters of *A Rebours*, we feel a sudden change of tone, as the voice of fountains changes at nightfall. His sharp outlook on reality is substituted by an introspective sight. Formerly he painted with the minute observation and the fastidious brush of a Jan Steen the portraits of *Marthe* and *Les Sœurs Vatard*, the backgrounds of *En Ménage;* an admirer of Impressionist painting, of Degas and Pissarro, he tried to apply their methods to his prose, to become an Impressionist in words, to render vividly the atmosphere of a place, the fleeting expression of a visage. Later on, although always a realist in his descriptions, he rises from the painting of sheer exteriorities to symbolism and a mystic interpretation of life. After the haunted gloom of *Là-bas* we come to the cloister

of penance and serenity in *En Route ;* it was as when, after a sultry moonless night, a divine freshness bathes the fields, and the morning star flames wildly—a sparkling dewdrop hung on an invisible stem—in the greening East.

His aim is to see, beyond the changing blue sky, the everlasting azure of Heaven. We have at first, in his early work, a moral blindness ; then, the consciousness of mystery and the desire to solve life's divine problem ; then, we see a gradual ascent of the spiritual dawn. It is in *A Rebours* that we catch the first glimpse of his conversion ; but already in *A vau-l'eau* he seems to ask of himself : " What am I here for ? " he is waiting " in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts."[1]

These imaginative and formal qualities give his work the character of poetry. His descriptions of art works are interpretations and revelations ; his soul vibrates in unison with these supreme flowers of the human soul, and while he transcribes paintings, etchings, carvings into words, he translates them into poetry. His novels are realistic pictures of life interspersed with " poems in prose." His love of colour—as well as his mastery in word-painting—may be seen at its best in his pages on the stained glass windows of the cathedral of Chartres ; his rendering of their gem-like hues reminds us of the window in Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes*. He draws his metaphors from the most various objects in order to suggest their colours ; in the " Window of Our Lady "—" Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière "—the central figure is standing out, in blue, from a background of "the crimson of garnets, the yellow of dead leaves, the violet of irises, the green of greengages." In other windows " the sun entangled the gold dust of its rays in the glass of a tinder hue, of a wine-red mixed with soot, like the juice of blackberries "; in the choir windows the light filtered through " the azure of clear sapphires, pale rubies, and the white of salt." He notes with subtle metaphors the modulations of the azure : " the limpid pale blue recalled the flames of punch, the burning powder of sulphur, and also the lightnings darted out by sapphires,

[1] *St. Peter*, ii. 1, 19.

but, so to say, very young sapphires, still naïve and trembling." He is lyrically eloquent on " the furnace of precious stones burning in the windows," " the incandescent flora," " the bouquets of gems blossomed in the fiery hot-houses of the stained glass windows as an offering to the Holy Virgin."[1] Sudden transitions from sensations of sight to sensations of hearing are often met with in the lyricism of these descriptive passages.[2] In *The Cathedral* he has sung the symbolic significance of gems, as he had done in the emblematic ring of precious stones in *En Route*[3]; but his preference always goes to almost unknown, out-of-the-way crystals. The petals of the flowers inlaid in the tortoise's shell, in *A Rebours*, are composed of cat's-eyes, cymophanes, and sapphirines. " These three stones," he says, " darted mysterious, perverse scintillations, painfully torn out of the icy ground of their turbid water." He loves the barbaric sumptuousness of Gothic jewels, shimmering on the red gold of pyxes and ciboriums, the prismatic tints of lucid enamels, the sombre magnificence of the mosaics in a Byzantine apse, the covers of beaten silver of mediaval Evangeliaries, enriched with roughly cut, smoky amethysts, bordered with naïve carvings in yellowish ivory. From his Flemish descent he inherited a bent to the grotesque, to grim, macabre inventions, such as we see nowadays in Belgian etchers—Henry De Groux and James Ensor—and, in older times, in Pieter Breughel; hence his liking for the nightmares of Jan Luycken and the lithographies of Odilon Redon, and his minute description of his dreams

[1] *La Cathédrale*, 394, 35, 391, 163, 402, 403.

[2] In *La Cathédrale*, 163 ; " The '*hallali*' of scarlets, the repeated *hallelujahs* of yellows.'—Cf. *En Rade*, 8 ; " To the solemn *clamour* of the fiery sunset had succeeded the sombre *silence* of a sky of ashes."

[3] His love of precious stones derives from his liking for bright, vivid light effects ; he loves them as sources of fantastic splendours, in which his reverie can soar with keen enjoyment. This may be exemplified by his description of the mystic vine blazing up in his dream of Esther and Ahasuerus in *En Rade*, 52 : (He sees in his sleep)" twisting boughs, the barks of which exuded clear gums of topazes and iridescent waxes of opals ; everywhere climbed vine-branches cut out of unique precious stones, everywhere flared a brazier of incombustible trunks, of leaves cut in the various lustres of green, the green light of emeralds—the glaucous of the aquamarina—the cerulean of beryls,—everywhere vines raised clusters of rubies, almandines, chrysoprases, with crimson, violet, yellow lightnings.—climbed in fruits of fire—a vintage ready to burst into a dazzling mass of flames."

in *En Rade*; hence also his fine chiaroscuro effects in dusky interiors—as the staircase of the church in *Là-bas*, and his fine still-life paintings tinted with the dusky, rich colours of Rembrandt.[1] We notice in him not only a poet's soul but also a painter's eye, enamoured of and deeply impressed by harmonies of lines, and, above all, of colours. He does not only show the tendency of a painter in his effort to find out the right term for line and colour, but in his keen enjoyment of pictures; his descriptions of art works are interpretations and revelations; he re-creates them, as a poet of nature re-creates a landscape in his rendering of it; the picture is transformed into a poem, its tints are made more vivid and significant, its expression more intense, suggestive and symbolic. He looks below the surface into the very heart of the work, be it etching, painting, cathedral; and in his analysis of it he rises from its visible loveliness to its unseen, transcendental beauty. He makes them his own, they are to him *tremplins de rêves*—spring-boards to dreams, inviting him to long reveries, opening to him endless perspectives of dreamland. When we compare a picture and Huysmans's description of it, we feel that a change has passed over the work, that a breath of poetry has quickened it with the life that the soul gives all things it loves, that imaginative ardour and beauty of transcription have transformed it into a poem. While analysing works of art he disentangles from them an allegorical meaning; in Moreau's pictures of Herodias, she becomes an emblematic figure: the lure of Sin, the mother of Death. Art becomes to him an aspiration to Eternal Beauty through its loveliness and ecstasy. He shows a fine, discriminative power in his valuation of Poe, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé; his appreciation is resolute and explicit, determined by a sure judgment, which emphatically asserts likings and dislikings, and is violent and

[1] See his "Red Herring" in *Le Drageoir aux épices*, 81: "Your robe is the palette of setting suns, the patina of old copper, the tone of the brownish gold of Cordova leather, the hues of sandalwood, saffron and Autumn foliage. Smoked herring, glistening and dull! when I behold your mail coat, I think of Rembrandt's paintings —I see again his jewels sparkling on black velvet, his trails of gold dust in the shadows, his suns breaking out under black arches"

ironical in fault-finding, enthusiastic in praise; Huysmans is a poet in criticism.

His novels represent successive forms of experience; real life—art—nature—the magic of evil—the peace of heavenly grace.[1] Every novel is a succession of impressions of life, nature, art and dreams, united by a single mood, though apparently disconnected—a mosaic of criticism and personal experiences kept carefully in tune, expressing a special spiritual period of his life, showing a turning-point in his life's journey—a mirror of a phase of his existence and his spiritual progress. His analysis is a slow discovery of self. Therefore his whole work may be considered as a poem of the soul, a lyrical manifestation in prose, like *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

FEDERICO OLIVERO.

[1] *Marthe* (1879), *En Menage* (1881), *A vau l'eau* (1882).—*A Rebours* (1884)—*En Rade* (1887)—*Là-bas* (1891)—*En Route* (1895), *La Cathédrale* (1898) *St. Lydwine de Schiedam* (1901), *L'Oblat* (1903), *Les Foules à Lourdes* (1906).

SIR CLEGES' CHERRIES

THE heavy flower of snow
Is fallen from God's hand:
"I will have winter blossoming
Over my land,"
He said.

The scentless clusters grow
On bush and hedge and tree;
Branches are thickly burgeoning
That nakedly
Showed dead.

The petals drift below
O'er bole and blade and root;
And lo! a greater miracle . . .
Sir Cleges' fruit
Hangs red.

EVELYN D. BANGAY.

RALPH HODGSON

TO-DAY among living English poets there stands one apart and that by virtue of sheer originality. Ralph Hodgson belongs to none of the several groups now consciously striving after originality—and thus by the very nature of their efforts defeating their own object, since originality, like happiness, is an indwelling spirit defying and evading all pursuit; he affects neither the bizarre nor the unintelligible, assays no novelties in metre or vocabulary, yet his poems stab with their freshness and this just because they are the vivid expression of a rare and singularly vital personality, the reflection and revelation of a glory hitherto unheeded and unguessed.

A lone seer, Hodgson has, indeed, but little in common with contemporary poets, save for the fastidiousness which he shares with A. E. Housman. Housman's poems stand self-confessed as " impelled " and surely it is not otherwise with Hodgson's. The format he chose for the greater part of his work—chap-books and broadsides, many of them charmingly and suggestively decorated by Lovat Fraser—was necessarily restrictive, but the smallness of his output has obviously been conditioned less by this than by his utter dependence upon genuine inspiration. Poetry, for Hodgson, has never been the careless pastime of an idle hour, but rather a channel for the bursting wonder of dazzling and breath-taking visions and an echo for high secrets revealed in stillness.

Rightly or wrongly Hodgson has been called a recluse; however that may be, there are certainly comparatively few facts generally accessible about his life. Yorkshire and Northumberland have both been acclaimed the county of his birth, but it would seem that it was in the former that he was born in 1872. He lived for a time in the United States and then worked as a pressman in Fleet Street, became a draughtsman on the pictorial staff of an evening paper and eventually editor of *Fry's Magazine*. He was awarded the Polignac Prize by the Royal Society for his poems " The Bull " and " The Song of Honour." He is at present in Japan, having, in 1924, been appointed lecturer in

poetry at the Tohoku University in Sendai. Besides being a specialist in poetry he is also a leading authority on bull terriers. So much for the external facts, which tell us far less of the real Hodgson than do his poems, for these perfectly reflect his true self just because they are never written —as is so often the case with lesser personalities—with the object of self-explanation, exploitation, or expression.

The real Hodgson emerges from his poems a childlike personality. The child-attribute of wonder is his in overflowing measure and is, indeed, the dominant note of all his work. Wonder-smitten before beauties which delight and often mystify, he finds life endlessly and enthrallingly interesting in all its myriad manifestations. Just as a child's curiosity is ready to fasten upon anything and everything, so Hodgson finds nothing too minute or insignificant to marvel at and has confessed :

> " I wond'ring watch the new gnats weave
> Mad mazes in the sky."

no less than

> " I wond'ring see the rainbow stain
> The sea ; "

and also

> " I dumbly guess
> Why on a wintry window-pane
> Late Edens effloresce ; "

and

> " Drain speculation to the dregs
> About a thistle seed."

The whole world, in fact, is food for his amazement :

> " I have a crystal treasure-box,
> Its stores are held from me ;
> I cannot force its thousand locks
> And have no master-key."

His wonder is born of his uniquely developed sense of beauty.

Hodgson is one of those rare souls to whom it is given to discern and

> " gaze
> On Beauty in her naked blaze."

He recognizes it in every guise and is—like Gillian Lovekin—so keenly aware of the " incipient splendour in common things " that he sees

> " No pitted toad behind a stone
> But hoards some secret grace,
> The meanest slug with midnight gone
> Has left a silver trace."

and discovers the greatness of Babylon in

> " The soldier lad; the market wife;
> Madam buying fowls from her;
> Tip the butcher's bandy cur;
> Workmen carting bricks and clay. "

He is never so absorbed, however, with beauty's subtleties as to miss its blazonings; he has an eye as well for beauty's gaudy flame as for its rarer and more delicate tints. The man who delights in

> " ferns and sudden stoats and popping mice "

delights not less in the " tawny gipsy girl ";

> " I liked her for the lumps of gold
> That jingled from her ears;
> I liked the flaring yellow scarf
> Bound loose about her throat,
> I liked her showy purple gown
> And flashy velvet coat."

It is in Nature and animal, bird, and insect creation that beauty thrusts itself most insistently upon him, but it often leaps at him, too, from men and books and pictures. Loveliness of colour, form, or sound merely as such—and altogether irrespective of the *how* or *where* of revelation—invariably awakes response in Hodgson's heart. But not alone in glorious or in common things does he discover beauty, but penetrating to the heart of tragedy, sordidness, and misery unbares it there also. A striking example of this is " The Bull," which is of all his poems the most original in conception. Its theme is intrinsically terrible and repellent—as decay must always be—but he makes of it something epic and this without lessening or skimming over any of its horror. The vile things of the forest are

brought relentlessly to light and still the forest is called—and we know that it is—" beautiful." The old wounded bull, " sick in soul and body both," is shown awaiting death.

> " Dwindled down with shame and grief,
> Half the bull he was before,
> Bones and leather nothing more,"

yet behind his fly-devoured and bloodshot eyes there float triumphant dreams of the glories of " his splendid yesterday " : and so through outward ignominy and repulsiveness there shines an innate majesty, and beauty and his tamelessness are one. Hodgson finds beauty everywhere and is enraptured by it.

Enraptured by beauty, Hodgson is also awed by it. He often delights in it just for itself without probing too deeply into its being or its nature, but always he is sensible of mystery upon mystery concealed beneath its loveliness. Face to face with beauty he trembles upon the brink of some strange greatness which he divines but cannot fathom. He feels life to be a riddle whose clue is hidden in the heart of simple and beautiful things, and guesses that " a linnet on a hawthorn hedge " gives the lie for all time to futility and embodies within itself the as yet mystery-veiled significance of the Universe. He sees in beauty, however, not merely life's significance but also its triumphant justification : imagining himself questioned after death as to his mortal life he pronounces it good simply because :

> " I saw blue flowers and the merlin's flight
> And the rime on the wintry tree,
> Blue doves I saw and summer light
> On the wings of the cinnamon bee."

An eminent critic has said of Hodgson's poetry that " religion is conspicuously absent," and this is certainly true as far as direct expression of creed or dogma or even conscious would-be approach to God is concerned ; but his poems are notwithstanding charged with a beauty-begotten reverence, faith and praise which is nothing less than " worship in spirit and in truth." Beauty is, for him, so bewondering and so fraught with deep—albeit imper-

fectly-captured—meaning that he cannot but be all-reverent before it, cannot but heart and soul believe that it is the earnest of Perfection, and cannot but joy in it with a fierce joy, which is flaming—and surely best-beloved—praise for its Creator and Designer.

Hodgson has several other child-attributes beside that of wonder, and one of the most strongly developed of these is a passion for animals, birds, and insects. This love breathes through all his work and is made up of delight, compassion, humility, understanding, and imagination. His observant delight is reflected in the fact that twenty-six different kinds of animals, twenty-seven different kinds of birds and eight different kinds of insects—including "scutcheoned moths with velvet hood"—find mention in his poems. His compassion is a singularly deep one, extending as it does beyond crying needs—such as those of "hungry sparrows in the snow"; beyond man-inflicted cruelty—such as is suffered by

> "wretched, blind pit ponies
> And little hunted hares;"

to a subtler consideration of dignity, which with angry bitterness he feels to be outraged in

> "tamed and shabby tigers
> And dancing dogs and bears."

His whole attitude to animals finds apt expression in "Dulcina, A Bull-Terrier," where he speaks of himself not as her owner or her master, but as:

> "blest o'er all who am
> Her bondsman and her bard;
>
> Who sees in her all things glassed fair,
> And Paradise would fly,
> That wanting her were angel bare
> And drear felicity":

such a poignant sense of animal wonder and lovableness necessarily inspires deep respect and begets a humility which makes condescension utterly impossible. So understanding is Hodgson's love for animals, birds, and insects that it actually enables him to project himself into their very minds and so identify himself with their inner selves.

The rare insight of understanding is, however, intensified by vivid imagination, as is curiously illustrated in " The Late, Last Rook " :

> " If there's a rook loquacious still
> In dream he hunts a furrow,
> And flaps behind a spectre team,
> Or ghostly scarecrows walk his dream."

Hodgson at times even carries this identification so far as to imbue—probably all unconsciously—some animal with one of his own most distinctive characteristics, as, for instance, when he imparts to " the bull "

> " Full of baby wonderment,
> Blinking out of silly eyes
> At a hundred mysteries."

his own ever-present consciousness of mystery and wonder, and also his own susceptibility to " dreaming things."

Hodgson is nothing if he is not a dreamer, for he is continually visited both by waking and by sleeping dreams which are born of an imagination keen as a child's, but quite the reverse of childish. His imagination, kept under superb control, is never fanciful, never allowed to run riot and is, therefore, amazingly creative. There is in it more than a strain of divination. It pierces Heaven, not by exercising itself in the nebulous or fantastic, but by penetrating to the hid-heart of reality. He is a man subject to visions which overpower and stagger and, on his own confession, leave him " dizzy " ; but these visions are in no way extravagant, nor merely transient exaltations, but a catching-up into the Heart of Wisdom and a selfless reception of flaming revelations of the Eternal Will. His two greatest poems, " The Last Blackbird " and " The Song of Honour " are the crystallisation of such revelation and as such demand detailed consideration.

Two distinct poems, " The Last Blackbird " and " The Song of Honour " are yet complementary : the former is a vision revealing the true enormity of Man's trespass against the Eternal Will for Beauty, the latter a transcendent—and yet practicable—vision of Beauty and the world as one ; and both together discover Man's rightful relation to the

Universe. " The Last Blackbird " is a terrible indictment of Man, and its ire strikes home all the more forcefully because it is in such sharp contradistinction to Hodgson's usual, all-embracing compassion. The recital of Man's infamy makes infinitely painful reading. Beauty has been given to him, a free and bounteous gift revealing itself in countless ways—in birds and insects, in stream and hill and heath, desert and plain—but he is blind and deaf to it, showing no reverence, because knowing no appreciation. Apathy, however, is not the sum, nor even the height of his crime : he is not merely unresponsive, he is aggressively destructive. His base utilitarianism is bitterly denounced :

> " He woodman turned and wide he laid his axe ;
> Stream, hill, and heath, to all he put his hand,
> Taxed pitilessly all, all paid the tax ;
> Only the sea ignored his ill demand,"

as it is again in " Babylon," where those

> " gentle sirs who sift the dust
> And burrow in the mould and must
> Of Babylon for bric-a-brac ;
> Who catalogue and pigeon-hole
> The faded splendours of her soul
> And put her greatness under glass—"

are with fierce resentment asked :

> " Must the ghoulish work go on
> Till her very floors are gone ?
> While there's still a brick to save
> Drive these people from her grave ? "

A tyrant and a murderer, who puts to flight " shy " Beauty and for sport and vanity kills and exterminates both animals and birds, Man is revealed as the arrogant ruler and despoiler of a world which he regards as existing solely to minister to his needs and pleasures. If " The Last Blackbird " paints the world as it is, then " The Song of Honour " blazes it as it was meant to—and may one day—become. The glory, comprehensiveness, and wonder of the vision in " The Song of Honour " can only be described as intoxicating. It is as though the veils of sight, hearing, and understanding are in an instant shrivelled by flaming lightning,

which in its flash illumines the heaven in earth and the infinite majesty of existence, so that life can never again—even in darkness or depression—be quite the same drab thing it was before. Fled are futility and pettiness: no longer is the world man's gaud or toy, but a perfect pæan of praise to its Creator; Man is no more autocrat, but humble companion in adoration with "wind and sea and bird and brute" and everything "in wood and stone and clay" which lauds simply by the distinctive beauty of its being. Man is no king, but a worshipping subject and only one of myriads whose worship is as beautiful and as much desired as his, which can only reach its height in recognition and in harmony with theirs. The essential unity of existence is laid bare, and Man thereby shaken out of self-conceived but false superiority into the humility which is one of the purest notes in Creation's universal song of praise. An epic of Life traced through suffering and striving to consummate Beauty, a storming of Man's spiritual blindness and deafness, and a dynamic inspiration towards an exultant fulfilment of his appointed share in the glorious and "harmonious hymn of being," "The Song of Honour" is nothing less than a wicket-gate into Heaven.

A singularly selfless man Hodgson is able to throw himself into the heart of men and things; his quivering to the joys and sufferings of others is childlike in intensity. The thought of a picture peasant girl's imagined lover puts him "in a frenzy of pleasure nearly pain"; he suffers the agony of trees in hurricane:

> "I let Imagination feign
> Great beating hearts in wooden trees,
>
> Gave wits and sense to knot and grain,
> And saw a heart-broke elm go mad
> Betwixt a bedlam twain";

he enters into the struggle of those "at odds with fortune night and day," plumbs with the lonely the depths of loneliness, shudders with the death-pointed at the chill of death: he feels both the travail and the ecstasy of the Universe to be his own. Childlike in intensity of feeling, he is also childlike in enthusiastic idealism and in his stan-

dard of values. He lives in the present, and puts aside practical considerations—such as money or utility—for the pursuit of happiness, which in his case is joying in the unfettered blossoming of Beauty.

All Hodgson's work attains a high artistic level and possesses strongly distinctive characteristics. His style is severely simple: he hates elaboration—and indeed with the flagrant exception of "The Song of Honour" scarcely ever has recourse to it—preferring suggestiveness to exhaustiveness. There are at least two poems—"The Swallow" and "Playmates"—in which simply by breaking off quite abruptly with poignancy foreshadowed but actually unexpressed, he is able to imply depths which no words could ever convey. This dislike of elaboration results in strangely concentrated expression; many of his short poems teem with significance and stagger with thought-provoking immensity. A subtle gift of atmosphere reveals itself again and again in Hodgson's work: the eeriness of "St. Athelstan," "The Royal Mails," and "Playmates" is infectious, the brooding atmosphere of the forest oppresses and the pregnant silence of "the down by moonlight" awes and holds us in its thrall. His poems have a curious vividity of their own, a vividity which is sometimes thought-vividity—as in "Stupidity Street"; and sometimes word-vividity—as in such a phrase as

> "a leopard bright as flame,
> Flashing fingerhooks of steel."

The most striking characteristic of his work is, however, its universality. His poems have in them the earnest of immortality; absolutely free from any bonds of place or time, of race or creed or subject, they are for all peoples and all times. He never localizes Nature—a respect in which he differs conspicuously from the majority of modern poets—and seldom individualises humanity; he interests himself in life as life and has but little wish to particularise among human, animal, or vegetable creation. Living in the present, he has yet no niche in time because he has such a vivid sense of its everlasting rise and fall, its ebb and flow, that his work does not date, but echoes rather—as in the

wonderfully suggestive lines of "Time, You Old Gipsy Man" and "Hammers"—the rhythm of eternity. The same breadth is apparent in subject and in treatment. "The Bull" and "Eve" grip by their concrete imagery and show him master of the objective: "The Song of Honour" and "The Last Blackbird" thrill with the intensity of their perception and show him equal master of the subjective. This universality flows from his realisation of the essential unity of existence.

Simple as is Hodgson's style, his poems are not always easy reading, as is instanced by "February" and by odd lines such as the following taken at random from "St. Athelstan":

> "A strong man's eyes with grief a-swim
> Are like to make an angel's dim:
> Whose prayers him choke or ever twice
> He prays will angels sacrifice
> A time of blessed Paradise
> To minister to him;"

Yet they are abundantly worth some effort, because he—like all true poets—has a glorious message to give to those who make his poetry their own by sympathetic steeping. He is specifically neither optimist nor pessimist; there is no wilful self-blinding to the reality of sin and suffering, he takes sharp account of cruelty and evil and bitterly denounces it, he overlooks none of life's dreariness nor sadness and yet his poetry is, notwithstanding, enheartening, uplifting and soul-awakening. It flames Beauty and reveals intrinsic wonder dormant everywhere, and thereby inspires a consciousness of destined greatness yet to be attained.

Isolated among the Moderns, Hodgson has a very real affinity with Blake—though Blake, curiously enough, finds no mention in "My Books" where Hodgson betrays his love for many other poets, including Moore, Milton, Clare, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, Burns, Byron, Shakespeare, and above all Shelley. Blake saw with a "directness of vision that sometimes paralyses us"—so too does Hodgson. These two poets share the same childlike outlook on life, the same love of birds and animals, and

there is in each a similar compassion for all created things. It was Blake who wrote:

> " A Robin Redbreast in a cage
> Puts all heaven in a rage;
> A dove-house filled with doves and pigeons
> Shudders hell through all its regions.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Each outcry from the hunted hare
> A fibre from the brain does tear;
> A skylark wounded on the wing
> Doth make a cherub cease to sing,"

but it might quite as easily have been Hodgson. Blake has the same consideration for " the beggar's dog and widow's cat " as Hodgson has for " sparrows in the snow." Blake knew Hodgson's dislike of utilitarianism:

> " The souls of men are bought and sold
> In milk-fed infancy for gold,
> And youths to slaughter-houses led;
> And beauty, for a bit of bread,"

and his " Cruelty has a human heart " foreshadows the fierce indictment of Man in " The Last Blackbird." Hodgson's poem, " The Treasure-Box," rings an echo of Blake's " The Crystal Cabinet," The man who " climbed a hill as light fell short" and heard "the Song of Honour" knows the truth of Blake's:

> " Great things are done when men and mountains meet;
> These are not done by jostling in the street,"

and has carried out his injunction

> " To see the world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower;
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And eternity in an hour."

If it is true as Ruskin said that " the whole difference between a man of genius and other men, is that the first remains in great part a child, seeing with the large eyes of children, in perpetual wonder " then Hodgson not only stands alone among contemporary poets, but as surely stands unchallenged in the foremost rank of Genius.

MAISIE SPENS.

WHEN I AM OLD

WHEN I am old, too old to see the stars
And only look for darkness, though the night
Still brings the silver magic of the moon
Threading the dusk, when dawn has no delight
No flutter of wings, no sleepy morning song
Only the silence and my laboured breath,
Then will I pray to live, to live once more,
And not to die—I shall have tasted death.

E. JOYCE HARRISON.

WINCEBY

ALL Winceby Field is under plough,
And men have long forgotten now
That once on wind-swept wold and bare
Fierce passion came to harvest there,
But we, who also hide the scars
Of bitter and relentless wars,
May hear again the battle-shout,
And watch the tumult turn to rout,
And count the troopers riding by
Beneath a dull October sky,
Erect, alert, and none the less
For weight of arms and weariness.

All Winceby Field is under plough,
And they are but a legend now,
Who long ago and in this place
Were ranged for battle, face to face,
But we, who also love this land,
May in some measure understand
The long-forgotten wars, for we
Remember great artillery,
And those who fought in former days
For no reward or any praise
But lived their brief heroic mood
A race apart, a brotherhood.

A. W. ULOTH.

THE POETRY OF ROBERT BUCHANAN

ROBERT BUCHANAN was born in Caverswall in Lancashire of Scottish parents on August 18th, 1841. His father was a keen follower of Robert Owen, the Socialist poet, and at one time used to stump the country as a controversialist on the side of Free Thought. When he moved to London, his house in Norwood became a rallying point for all types of apostles of progress. It was in this stimulating atmosphere of free and frank discussion that young Robert, an only child, spent his earliest years. He had a boy's ordinary affection for his father, but for his mother an overmastering worship that remained steadfast throughout her long life of eighty years. It is only natural that his mother idolised him. As a boy he was never happy away from her, and sheltered from adverse influences, his naturally sensitive nature became over-sensitive and too highly strung, and proved a handicap to him in the rough and tumble of later years. Although he had no formal religious teaching from his parents, his mother developed and deepened his sympathy with others and his instinctive hatred of injustice and oppression. At the age of ten his father moved to Scotland, and young Robert soon learned the meaning of intolerance, for, as the son of a free-thinking father in a land of the strictest orthodoxy, he was treated as a social outcast. His resentment of this treatment culminated in his being expelled from a school at Rothesay for being restless and mutinous.

But his Scottish environment was not all unhappiness. Poetry was in that Scottish air, and he drank it in with a growing delight. At that period poems were read and discussed in every village in the neighbourhood; indeed, there were few villages that could not boast a poet who had appeared in print. Then with all his boyish soul hungry for the greatest poetry he was taken to see the actor Vandenhoff in *King Lear*. It was his first real contact with Shakespeare. The effect of that first contact on an artistic mind is always profoundly interesting. On one it may be the harmonious beauty of the language, on another the won-

derful imagery, on a third the marvellous insight into character that makes the greatest impression. But let Buchanan himself tell us what appealed to him.

"It swept me beyond myself when I was a boy. I feel now, as I felt then, the unapproachable truth and sublimity of such passages as the one in Act III, where the storm-beaten monarch first realises the mystery of human wretchedness and pain. Here the very quick of pity is touched. . . . The influence on my own character of this masterpiece was deep and abiding. I first gained from it that perception of the piteousness of life which has been, despite all aberrations into contemporary savagery, the inspiration of all my writings. To me the storm-tossed figure of Lear represented humanity itself, swept hither and thither by the elemental and seemingly aimless cruelty of nature, yet coming at last to anchorage and an equally elemental peace and calm. I was taught by the contemplation of his wretchedness, as he himself was taught by personal strife and sorrow, to feel for that sorrow of which I had hitherto taken 'too little heed'."

It is on the poems with this inspiration that Buchanan's claim to greatness must rest.

At the age of nineteen, he came to London with a friend and fellow poet, David Gray, to try his fortunes. Gray lived but a short time leaving his sorrowing friend to struggle on alone. After a hard fight, Buchanan gradually won recognition not only as a poet but also as a novelist, essayist, biographer, critic, and playwright. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that in his prime Robert Buchanan was the most versatile man in England, with the possible exception of Lord Lytton. It was during this hard fight for recognition that he narrowly escaped disaster. Young and very proud, he sometimes felt acutely and resented bitterly the patronising way in which Mr. Maxwell, a newspaper proprietor, occasionally received him. So one morning he picked up a parcel of MS., procured a thick cudgel and went to see Mr. Maxwell, fully intending (to use his own words) "to beat out what brains the ruffian possessed and offer him up as a sacrifice to the Muses!" Buchanan says he was really in earnest, but fortunately his reception on that occasion was friendly, and the cudgel was not even hinted at during the interview. It is an example of the lengths to which an oversensitive man is sometimes prepared to go.

Throughout a lifetime that only lasted sixty years, Buchanan's energy seemed inexhaustible. Despite all his other activities, including the long and bitter controversy with what he called The Fleshly School of Poetry, his literary output was enormous, his poems alone running to over 1,000 pages, in double columns, of closely printed type. This article is solely concerned with his poems, in which his range was as great as his output. Sonnets, lyrics, ballads, narrative and dramatic poems all came easily from his pen, but his greatest work is to be found in his poems of the life of the underworld of London, and in a series of mystical poems in which he embodied with a fine imagination his theories of the ultimate meaning of life.

Let us first turn to his lyrics, many of which are embedded in his longer poems. Here is a stanza from "A Spring Song in the City."

> "Little barefoot maiden,
> Selling violets blue,
> Hast thou ever pictured
> Where the sweetlings *grew?*—
> Oh, the warm wild woodland ways,
> Deep in dewy grasses,
> Where the wind-blown shadow strays,
> Scented as it passes!"

And another from "The Birth of Balder" in "Balder the Beautiful":—

> There blent with his growing,
> The leaf and the flower
> The wind lightly blowing
> Its balm from afar,
> The smile of the sunshine
> The sob of the shower,
> The beam of the moonshine,
> The gleam of the star.
> 'Mid shining of faces
> And waving of wings,
> With gifts from all places
> Came beautiful things;
> The blush from the blossom,
> The bloom from the corn,

Blent into his bosom,
Ere Balder was born."

Is not this word pattern pleasing with its delightful interweaving of the richer vowel sounds ?

The following is from " The Outcast."

" And slowly, softly, down the night
O'er the smooth black and glistering sea,
The starry urns of crystal light
Were filled and emptied momently !
Then in the centre of the glimmer
The round moon ripen'd as she rose,
And covered with the milk-white shimmer
The glassy waters took repose ;
And round the isle a murmur deep
Of troubled surges half asleep
Broke faintlier and faintlier
As midnight took her shadowy throne ;
In heaven, on earth, no breath, no stir,
No sound, save that deep slumbrous tone !
Wonder of darkness !—'neath its wing
All living things sank slumbering."

" The Wedding of Shon Maclean " is a bagpipe melody which tells us that Buchanan was by no means an anchorite or a mere visionary, but a man whose feet were on the earth and who was fully appreciative of the joys of conviviality. I defy any Scotsman to read the chorus of this ballad without some stirring of his pulse !

" To the wedding of Shon Maclean,
Twenty Pipers together
Came in the wind and the rain
Playing across the heather ;
Backward their ribbons flew,
Blast upon blast they blew,
Each clad in tartan new
Bonnet and blackcock feather :
And every Piper was fou,
Twenty Pipers together " :

with the inevitable conclusion !

" And the twenty Pipers at break of day
In twenty different bogholes lay,
Serenely sleeping upon their way
From the wedding of Shon Maclean ! "

And now let us turn to the more serious works of Robert Buchanan. Chief among these are the *London Poems*, which he wrote a few years after he came to London. I have already mentioned that his struggle was a hard one, and in the course of that struggle he came into close touch with the underworld of London. His natural sympathy with suffering and injustice was quickened, and in *London Poems* he expresses his sympathy with types of humanity that are not usually food for poetic thought.

Mr. J. A. Noble, in an introduction to some of Robert Buchanan's poems, has said that :

" Years before Buchanan was born, Thomas Hood had sung of the suicide of an ' unfortunate ' and by so singing had triumphantly defied the traditions of poetical responsibility. Still in the midst of the defiance, there was a suggestion of compromise. Hood did not dare to be quite true to the actual, and the picture was accordingly touched up. We know that any picture of a subject such as that treated in the ' Bridge of Sighs,' in which there appears ' only the beautiful ' is not simply an idealisation, but a transformation of reality ; and while true idealisation enhances this, false idealisation detracts from the value of any work of art in which it is found. There are two errors into one of which those poets who deal in homely and human themes are apt to fall. The first is that of men who, like Hood, preserve the poetry by keeping back some of the truth ; the second is that of a writer like Crabbe, who lets us see all the truth but seems unable to show us the underlying poetry."

In Robert Buchanan, he says, we find both truth and poetry.

One of the *London Poems* is " In Tiger Bay." A man sees in a dream a tigress watching and finally killing a sleeping negro. Then he sees a " tigress-woman " watching and thirsting to kill a dying sailor in a garret for the sake of his money. But

> " The light on his face appalleth her . . .
> His soul shines out and she fears his soul,
> Tho' he lieth sleeping."

And she does not kill him.

Then follows an impassioned protest by the dreamer to God who made both the tigress and the " tigress-woman." God's reply is one of the most beautiful things that

Buchanan ever wrote. Here, indeed, is power, sincerity and serenity.

". . . Only a spark !
So faint as yet, and so dim to mark,
. . . . . .
Fan it, feed it, in love and duty,
. . . . . .
Till it burns the bestial frame and face
To its own dim beauty. . . . "

Two other *London Poems* almost as powerful and imaginative are " Nell," which describes the sorrows of an unmarried mother on the day her man is hanged for murder, and " Liz ", the pathetic tale of another unmarried mother, who dies leaving a little boy for her Joe.

In all these *London Poems*, sad as they are, there is a strong under-current of unquenchable hope. However degraded, demoralised or bestial a human being might appear to be, Buchanan still believed that the great God or good which rules the world had implanted a " spark," and that in that " spark " was ever the possibility of ultimate redemption. Throughout his life this belief was of the very fibre of his being.

This same unquenchable hope of redemption is instinct in his " Ballad of Judas Iscariot," in which the soul of Judas Iscariot, after vainly trying to bury his body, at long last finds forgiveness of the Bridegroom, who is Christ. The form of this poem is reminiscent of *The Ancient Mariner*.

London Poems may be described as the expression of Buchanan's imagination of what happens before the veil. In his *Book of Orm, the Celt* are his imaginings of what happens behind the veil. In the final vision of Orm is another and even more brilliant flight of the imagination on the theme of the redeeming power of love. God's judgment has been pronounced and all the world, save one man, has been redeemed. That man had sinned all sins ; his soul was " a blackness and foul odour." He is unrepentant, has no desire for any contact with good, but finally makes one appeal to God.

" . . . He is content to dwell
In the Cold Clime for ever, so thou sendest
A face to look upon, a heart that beats,
A hand to touch—albeit like himself,
Black, venomous, unblest, exiled and base :
Give him this thing, he will be very still,
Nor trouble thee again."

Only two in Heaven are willing to go to comfort him—the one his mother whom he slew in anger, the other his wife whom " he stript, with ravenous claws, of raiment and of food." They go. Their love overcomes him. " For an alien sound, a piteous human cry, a sob forlorn, thrilled to the heart of Heaven " and " The Man is saved ; let the Man enter in ! "

The same thought is lightly touched on in *The Outcast*. This somewhat bitter poem is, however, chiefly interesting in providing a comparison of two poets in their expression of similar ideas.

In *The Outcast* we read :

" My sin
Falls like a garment to my feet.
Naked I front thy Judgment Seat."

This seems to find a distant echo in

" Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke
My harness piece by piece thou hast hewn from me.

And again

" Or when with sudden thunderous cry
The chariots of the clouds roll by "

might almost have directly inspired :

" Or whether thunder-driven
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven."

Robert Buchanan and Francis Thompson certainly had affinities.

In conclusion, here are two sonnets typical of many written during a holiday by Lake Coruisk.

The Cup of Tears.

My God! My God! with passionate appeal
  Pardon I crave for these mad moods of mine—
Can I remember, with no heart to feel,
  The gift of Thy dear Son, the Man Divine—
  My God! what agonies of love were Thine,
Sitting alone, forgotten, on Thy height,
Pale, powerless, awful in that Lonely Light,
  While 'neath Thy feet the cloudy hyaline
Rain'd blood upon the darkness—where Thine Own
  Held the black Cup of all earth's tears, and cried!
Ev'n then, tho' Thou wert conscious of his groan,
  Pale in that Lonely Light Thou did'st abide,
Nor dared, even then, tho' shaken on Thy throne,
  To reach Thy hand and dash the Cup aside.

The Happy Hearts of Earth.

Whence thou hast come, thou knowest not, little Brook,
  Nor whither thou art bound. Yet wild and gay,
Please in thyself, and pleasing all that look,
  Thou wendest, all the seasons, on thy way;
  The lonely glen grows gladsome with thy play,
Thou glidest lamb-like through the ghostly shade;
To think of solemn things thou wast not made,
  But to sing on, for pleasure, night and day.
Such happy hearts are wandering, crystal clear,
  In the great world where men and women dwell;
Earth's mighty shows they neither love nor fear,
  They are content to be, while I rebel,
Out of their own delight dispensing cheer,
  And ever softly whispering 'All is well!"

Buchanan appears to be a neglected poet to-day, but in his best poems there is an imaginative power, an individual beauty of expression and above all, such a strong and tender human sympathy that he must surely in the years to come win a place among the Immortals.

T. L. ADAMSON.

The special collection of poems by a group of "Poetry Reviewers," selected by Miss A. E. Mackay, previously referred to as "New Numbers," will appear shortly with the amended title of "The Poets' Fellowship," and should be obtainable from all booksellers, price 3s. 6d. net. Readers will find it deserves their special attention.

POETRY AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FOR obvious reasons the school from which I have drawn these observations must remain anonymous; sufficient to say that it is one of the "Sacred Seven." It is possible that its attitude towards poetry and literature in general may be totally different from that of its fellows; not having been a bird of passage I cannot tell; but I doubt it.

To the majority poetry is a hazy, unsubstantial thing, certainly not to be encouraged, and best ignored. The few who seem to understand it are rarely those who have been "successful," that is those who are good athletes and cheery animals with loud laughs and care-free lives; and of such is the "aristocracy" of a public school. Games are the only work; work is a necessary evil to be got rid of as best may be. Cheating, which at work is the mark of a "good fellow," is of course beyond the pale at games; for the whole spirit of the public schools is the deification of athletics, and the production and cultivation of the hard instinct.

Consequently poetry has a very thin time. English is taught by an itinerant English master or (for he has not the time to give *every* form two classes a week) the form master, who may or may not be an English expert. Possibly both these periods may be devoted to the reading of poetry; probably only one, which means three-quarters of an hour each week.

Some poet is selected for the term's study; say Keats or Browning; a book of selections is ordered for each member of the form. A brief life of the poet is given until the books arrive—preferably with a few stories to introduce the "human touch"—and the poems are chosen for the next lesson. If it is Browning that is to be read, then the poems will be: "The Laboratory," "Evelyn Hope," "The Patriot," "Prospice," and "Instans Tyrannus."

The lesson comes round; the poems are hastily read in the ten minutes before the day begins, or (more probably) during the class before. Questions are asked:

" The air broke into a —— like bells."

Supply the missing word.

Etc., etc.

Then when the marks are given up either false ones are chosen, or " Sir, I can never remember poetry ! " from a less hardened sinner. It is not the fault of the master ; it is due to a system which gives too much to one person and too little time—what is an hour and a half a week for English ?—to the study of English poetry. There is therefore little to be hoped for from here.

The real work is all individual. One boy inspires another by his own enthusiasm ; he quotes aloud his latest " *discovery*," perhaps C. H. Sorley's *Song of the Ungirt Runners*:

> " We swing ungirded hips
> And lightened are our eyes,
> The rain is on our lips,
> We do not run for prize."

or W. B. Yeats' *Lake Island of Innisfree*. And the other starts reading poetry for himself. This is the real, the vital way that the love of poetry is passed on from one to the other at school ; and the love burns all the more brightly because it is not a public one, nor one encouraged by the multitude.

This sounds gloomy ; perhaps it is. Gloomy too is the way in which the world calls the average boy's neglect of all literature save " thrillers " by the careless term of " healthy." For of a school, not more than 10 per cent. are genuinely fond of poetry ; another 25 per cent. prefer it in school to other forms of work ; while the remaining 65 per cent. are frankly philistines.

But occasionally some master comes, who by his own enthusiasm, by his constant quotations and allusions, inspires not one boy but a whole form. Such a character is not common ; there was one during the war (he was killed on active service) who so inspired his form that they published a book of poems written by themselves. They lived poetry ; they brought it into their lives and into their work, instead of keeping it " on tap " for special occasions.

And only by such white hot enthusiasm can poetry be brought into the virile but philistine atmosphere of a public school.

F. WHITWORTH.

[That this interesting statement is but the expression of a point of view with which we are forced to disagree, is the opinion of another public schoolman on the staff of THE POETRY REVIEW. The article was written by one who is still at a public school, and it was written from a public school, where, as a matter of fact, we believe we are right in thinking that the study and writing of verse is encouraged more than is usual. The writer has the customary deprecatory remarks to make about the "public school system," etc. (Might we suggest that though "cheating at work" may be the mark of a "good fellow," "good fellows" are not necessarily cheats?) The Public Schools are supposed to teach their pupils the writing of English as well as its appreciation, and although we realize that the reading and study of poetry is an important step in both directions, considering that an hour and a half a week is all that is allotted to English subjects, surely 50 per cent. of this allowance being devoted to poetry cannot be called "a thin time." Incidentally, the magazine of Mr. Whitworth's particular school contains more verse than any periodical of the type we have seen. As for the matter of individual influence. Whence comes the original influence, if not from that 45 minutes a week? Mr. Whitworth does not seem to realise how much is due to the wonderful work of the "itinerant English master," whose visits, whatever construction Mr. Whitworth's sophistication may put on them, do give genuine pleasure.]

SYLVIA.

WE startle the thrushes out of their coverts
We frighten the dunnocks that creep in the grass,
She, when she moves by the grey winter hedgerows,
Steals by so softly they scarce hear her pass.

We, tho' we fain would go soft thro' the forest
Crackle the beech-mast and waken the jays.
She of the white feet and long flaxen tresses,
Silently moves through her own forest ways.

P. HUNT.

SEPARATION

To Monkscombe

WILL anyone love these as I have loved them all:
The old oak beams that span the rooms so wide,
Low-ceilinged, they, and cool in summer-tide,
Like the quaint passages and long flagged hall;
The sunlit garden, and the quiet plane-tree tall,
Deep-scented stocks, the bed where balm grows high;
The lovely lilies, still, and very shy
When on their pale lips the moon's kisses fall?

Will anyone love these—the walls of kind grey stone,
That for four hundred years have welcomed dawn,
And wait serene though weatherbeaten, worn
With all the joys and sorrows they have known,
And in their agèd arms that cradle life have grown
Such little ferns, and primroses, and moss,
Down where the pond's delighted wavelets toss
As though to reach the treasures they were shown?

And these—warm scent-waves from the bean-field standing nigh;
Dim woods whence pigeons call, nor birds' songs cease;
Far hills, strong in their everlasting peace,
Beneath the glory of an evening sky.
Will anyone love you, heart's home, as much as I—
Yet I must leave your beauty and your rest!
Sleep on within the bosom of the West—
And know my inarticulate good-bye.

K. O'NEILL-BAILEY.

A LAUREL WREATH

FATE decreed that I should live
A poet and a fugitive.

When I die, from yonder heath
Get me, Fate, a laurel wreath.

D. H. VERDER.

THE ÆSTHETIC LYRIC

OF the many forms of poetry (each conceived by a different emotion), none is more popular than the modern æsthetic lyric. Take up any modern anthology, and it will be seen that this pure form of poetry has a tremendous following.

This form of verse is a musical version of the modern water-colour, a bright, cleverly designed picture, in which æsthetic blue and greens and yellows predominate, with here and there, lurking in unexpected places, a note of deeper blue or purple or cerise. Yet it does not rely solely upon colour and design; there is also a subtle "something" which sets it apart, and produces a feeling of intense pleasure.

The æsthetic lyric glories in white mist and silver moths; in moonlight and starlight and candle-light; in sunlight; in shadows; in bare trees; in leafy trees; in dancing children; in scents; in shining pools; in coloured flowers; in silver streams; in shining meadows; in coloured fields; in sunlit poplars; in painted caravans; in white roads; in dewspangled grass; and so on.

All these are definitely æsthetic and were originally made use of by poets who are true artists, though they may be unable to draw a line. Consider how much poetry is lacking in colour because the poet is not an artist, and how much poetry is unmusical because the poet has not a musical ear, though its dramatic quality may be excellent, and its idea striking. When we get a poet who is an artist, a musician, a philosopher, and a dramatist we get Shakespeare. Many of his sonnets are perfect examples of æsthetic poetry:

> "When daisies pied and violets blue
> And lady-smocks all silver-white
> And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
> Do paint the meadows with delight,——
>
> "When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
> And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
> When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
> And maidens bleach their summer smocks . . ."

This cannot be called observation, because shepherds do not "pipe an oaten straws," yet what a pure æsthetic

picture that line gives us! He did not tell us that the "ploughman homeward plods his weary way," though he must have seen the ploughman many times. And though I would not depreciate Gray's "Elegy," it is not æsthetic.

This influence is also noted in music. Witness the popularity of Chopin, Grieg, Edward German, Débussy, Schumann, Schubert, all of whom show a pure æsthetic feeling in many of their works. And in mentioning these composers it is interesting to compare their work with the great poets of the past and to-day. Chopin I put with Keats, Schumann with Shelley, Beethoven with Milton, Grieg with Wordsworth, Handel with Francis Thompson, Débussy with Walter de la Mare, Edward German with W. B. Yeats.

If we try to account for this æsthetic tendency in modern taste, we shall find that it lies in the fact that (in spite of what the pessimists say) we are definitely changing and progressing as a nation. War (the theme of much past poetry) we are heartily tired of; religion (in the old sense) is gradually losing its hold on the emotions; and it is no longer fashionable to sing of love. We are left, therefore, with the desire for and love of beauty—not the beauty admired in the Victorian Age (a florid picture like the view from Richmond Hill), but the clear æsthetic beauty of a misty hill on a pale dawn seen across fair meadows, or the calm beauty of an ash tree in her winter dress, shining after rain.

Many people will call this a fashion, and a fashion it undoubtedly is, yet its influence will be sure and lasting, for it is inspired by love of *simplicity and sincerity*.

I quote Mr. Robert Bridges "Spring goeth all in White" as a delightful example of the æsthetic lyric:

"Spring goeth all in white,
Crowned with milk-white May:
In fleecy flocks of light
O'er heaven the white clouds stray:

"White butterflies in the air;
White daisies prank the ground!
The cherry and hoary pear
Scatter their snow around."

BEATRICE EVE.

THE DEATH OF PROSERPINA

STRAINING westward
In the full front of the strife
'Gainst frenzied gusts
And the fell autumn's roaring,
I saw
Where like torn waves
On the high tide of the winds
The clouds broke
In long breakers
On the deep cerulean bay,
Crested and crisp and curled;
And streaming rains
Prickly and sharp as glass
Shivered against the ground
With a smart hissing sound,
And flocks of newly-fallen leaves
Like gulls flapping,
Fanned the grey air,
And all the trees were bare
Blackened
Like burnt-out brands,
As though their late autumnal aura
Were a fire,
And all their leaves
Amber and burnished copper and dull bronze,
Consuming flames
For the incineration of the year,
And the last hot leaves now tinkling to the ground
Red cinders from a pyre.
So
Self-consumed,
The body of the year
Is brought to burial,
And the bearer-winds
Take up the charred remains
And scatter them,
Like ashes,
On the earth.

Now that the place is pale
Where she has passed
And muted the aerial symphony,
Let us, as for a lost Persephone,
Invoke
The vernal splendour
And the penetrating strain
Of the departed year
Since not for us will Coré come again.

Another sun shall turn
And other Springs shall rise,
The summer stars shall burn
In immemorial skies,
The breath of flowers new-blown
Embalm the country day
When the hedgerows shall be strewn
With hawthorn all the way
And all growth, like a garland
Adorn the lovely year
From the pastures and the ploughland
And the prairies far and near ;

But this Year is a spirit that's expired,
A body that's decayed and dropped to dust.
Not these will come again :
The flowers that we fingered in those woods—
—Cuckoos calling
Across the park canals—
—The shooting stars in that midsummer sky—
The pheasant's scurry in the undergrowth—
Nor thud of stags—
Nor savour of the hay
Upon a certain day—
Nor the bronze beam on clouds
In calm twilight weather
When languid, the moon
Is launched upon the night
With tarnished light—

Nor all the intangible and timeless shapes
Glimmerings, murmurs, shadows, trances,
Begotten of the Year;
These disappear
As to some Hades-shore
Of mud and gloom
Whence never flowers bloom
Nor Proserpina comes back any more.

W. E. BOURNE.

TO AMARYLLIS

OVER the hills on wings of morning
The wind is ruffling through the grass,
The sleepy world beneath us scorning,
Over the hills on wings of morning
Deaf to the valley's soft suborning
God like upon the crest we pass—
Over the hills on wings of morning
The wind is ruffling through the grass.

Over the gusty hilltop striding
With bright limbs full of the sun's gold,
We hear the eager larks confiding
(Over the gusty hilltop striding,)
We see the silent falcon riding
And watch the bannered clouds unrolled—
Over the gusty hilltop striding
With bright limbs full of the sun's gold.

Now, while the life in us is singing
Over the hills on morning feet,
Now, with the sun's kiss round thee clinging,
Now, while the life in us is singing,
Wide to the wind thy soft hair flinging,
Shall none but these things kiss thee, sweet?
Now, while the life in us is singing
Over the hills on morning feet?

JOHN SILVER.

THE DIDACTIC CURSE

(Poets) . . . " The teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true, that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion . . . ."

SHELLEY: *Defence of Poetry.*

The following résumé is the outcome of " table talk "—ordinary, casual conversation about poets, poetry, the meaning and function of poetry. It is definitely, we hope, a succinct expression of certain feelings about the power of poetry and the values of poetry in the lives of people and nations, and in the destiny and direction of nations and the destiny of our race. It is the writing down of conversation—the outcome of conversation pulled together by Joseph Auslander.

IS there a place among us to-day for didactic poetry? The question suggests itself with peculiar force because none of the poets whom we consider elected and powerful seems to be writing that kind of poetry.

And yet there was a time when poetry was the mother of proverbs even as it was once, not so long ago, the fountain of fiction and the voice of tragedy. At the mere notion of poetry daring to do anything but sing or snort prodigiously or perform circus stunts, we shudder. Whatever the poet does or does not do, it is the unmentionable abomination for him to teach. The philosophical poet comes equally under the heretic frown. Therefore poets like Robinson must either insinuate their message or speak in parables to a small clan.

The poetry of the East has always been didactic. The great Hebrew prophets and psalmists thundered and prayed no less beautifully because their purpose and their inspiration was definitely didactic. It is feverish to deny that the evangelical and the visionary songs walk under a curse to-day. The curse may be our recoil to the Victorian righteousness. But righteous or not, Browning and Tennyson made great poetry. Even before that antimacassar period so abhorrent with our intellegentsia, Shelley was certainly no less lyrical for being ardently prophetic. He had a hot social conscience and a Utopian frenzy in his blood—and he was, by the grace of God, a singer. The melody never lacks, though it goes inextricably wedlocked with his passion for emancipating and reforming the world.

Perhaps we can explain the phenomenon of Edgar Guest even if we cannot approve it. He is essentially a didactic poet. What he teaches may be banal, maudlin, feebly and blatantly addressed to the great unwashed. But he is read, he is cut out and pasted into scrap-books, he is reverenced, and, what is most important, he is remembered. In a time when poets are born, not paid, he is paid, and heaven alone knows how much.

Is there something rotten in the state of Denmark? Do we stew in corruption, political and personal? Are our morals in a mess? Very well then, where are our poets? Why do they sleep? The pulpit emits the weakest little yap. Congress howls and filibusters like a caucus of coyotes. Where are our poets? They are wont once to go up and make augury for the people before the jealous gods. They were the priests. They warned kings and emperors. They were the movers and shakers of the world!

Entirely in harmony with this utterance, and enjoying the privilege of being among the first readers of Mr. Auslander's "Letter to Elinor Wylie," we are affixing the poem to this interesting statement:

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers, lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

I will not burden you with pleasant words,
That being neither here nor there with these
Volleys of major sevenths and minor thirds,
The gaudy salvos, the loud eulogies.

Loving your silence, I will not intrude;
Feeling your jewelled scorn, I will not praise:
Shall I dispute the eagle's solitude?
Or bell the fox? Or hood the falcon's gaze?

Let me not join the general shout, the sounds
Of the strident pack that loves the noise it makes—
You turn Actaeon to your own swift hounds,
You twist Laocoon to your own snakes.

You were a sort of golden Puritan,
And, by your own confession, loathed the riches
That swarm the languid valleys; so you ran
With antelopes upon precarious niches

Pasturing a hard frozen salt that burned
And glittered on the tongue; the taste of ledges
Tingled; the palate of your soul discerned
Amid a muddled world the gleam of edges.

The casual and clumsy bastinado
Of time and circumstance upon the mind
Found you entrenched in beauty and bravado
Fiery as frost, as fire and ice defined.

What could we know who looked upon your pallor?
What could we guess who saw your level eyes?
Under the brown poised wings of hair what valour
That is most frightened when it most defies?

As in the flesh of Tyrian stuff the streak
Of thread stitched in like blood; the purple vein
Gasping through anguished marble; the proud beak
Honed on its own breast—such was your disdain.

And such the scrupulous passion, the astute
Tyranny of perfection that the word
Hung like some perilous and silver fruit,
Swung from the hair of gold a flashing sword.

For you had gazed upon that Face whose flame
Dazzles the eyeball dark, and in your heart
You knew that nothing could be quite the same
Again save in the livid truth of art.

There was the rampart! There the bright escape!
There the brief mercy that is merciless!
There with cold wings the high and shadowy shape
Imprisoning the fugitive they bless!

. . . .

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me!" cried
The Lady of Shalott.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XXIII

WE are here reviewing Edwin Arlington Robinson's new book—*Cavender's House*—the posthumous book of Miss Elinor Wylie, and the lately unearthed Emily Dickinson book of poems. *Cavender's House* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929) is finding an admiring and enthusiastic public. Mr. Robinson has reached the point in his career where he was won his definite—and distinguished—place with the integrity of a New Englander. His genius makes a deeper mark in *Cavender's House* than heretofore, in the restrained emotional intensity of its story, illustrating spiritual necessities with the accompanying mystic note.

It is a shadowy world Mr. Robinson takes us into, where two appear to meet, or appear to think they appear, or we appear to appear to think they appear—yet do they? It is a sheer fabric with many sage lines, and small wonder, is it, that the reader becomes tangled, as it were, in the midst of settings like these? One must be in sympathy with the suffering cult to find pleasure in so dark a tale so darkly told. Profit there may be, perhaps, on the basis of the ultra Puritan that, since it is so gloomy it is, perforce, good for the soul.

It is not a little thing to tackle the worst moments of remorse of a man's life, even though he be "just any man." This, I assume, is what the story concerns itself with, but there are tones and over-tones in this strange grey tale hinting at haunting and the like, that one may read with a new interpretation every time—perhaps. It is truly a "mystery play."

Cavender's utter despair is on each of the 103 pages. On page 35 we find:

> "Nothing was on his side; and certainly
> Not the still woman who invited him
> Indifferently to rapture or despair."

Two fine portraits exist here—tragic creations—in the following:

> "You were a man of many promises,
> With deeds enough already to warrant them;
> You were a playful and persuasive man,
> With power and will beneath your levity
> To make a woman curious to be bent
> A little, but not broken, you were a man
> Who covered yourself with your vitality
> So well that only another man might find you—
> And he might not; you were a man designed
> To change a woman to a desperation,
> And to destroy her when your passion felt
> A twinge of insecurity. I'll wager
> You have not had so many compliments
> In twelve years until now. . . .
>
> . . . . . .

" A man of many ways and means,
Of many infringements and necessities."

And now for the portrait of Cavender's Laramie :

" . . . No permanence
Was ever a part of her, nor was it now :
Not that it mattered now. She might enlarge
His errors, and a former few offences,
Into enormities and still be secure,
Holding a whip that was beyond his reach
And seeing, she could smile and strike him with it
Till he should cower, and with a smarting soul
Pray for her mercy—— . . ."

And the world is described as follows :

" . . . Or was the world,
And the strange parasites infesting it,
Serpent, or man, or limpet, or what not,
Merely a seeming-endless incident
Of doom ? If it was so, why was it so ?
He could do nothing. He was in a trap.
Nothing was on his side."

Cavender's Laramie speaks with the mysterious instruction of an initiate, and contrasting pitifully is the poor, confused Cavender :

" The world was made for you,
And you were master of as much of it
As had your shadow on it while you stayed
At home."

Quoting again from her arraignment of him we find a tangible philosophy and a fond hope is offered in the following impressive lines :

" Eternity may have time and room to show us
How so transformed a fabric may be woven
Of crimes, corruptions, and futilities,
That we shall be confounded with a wonder
At our not seeing it here. Yes, there is hope " ;

Laramie describes his love and her conclusions :

" While I believed in you and in your love,
Which was a sort of love—the sort that owns
And gloats, and prowls away complacently
For capture and a change. I had supposed
That I was bright and lively and adequate,
And even a match for your discrimination,
But I was not. I should have done more thinking.

I should have taught myself more amiable
And animal ways to make me surer still
That I should never be sure."

A re-affirmation we have :

" Was ever an insect flying between two flowers
Told less than we are told of what we are ? "

There are as many minds as there are kinds of poetry. There is not only one brand. And followers are who love the shadow and followers are who love the light. The poet Poe constantly contrasted the shadow with the proximity of the light, and in his glimmering images, even in his darkest moments sustained the mind in a splendid absorption.

Thoughts from the pen of the Syrian poet Abu'l Ala reached me recently on the Nile, opening worlds of promise of beauty made tangible to the seeker, and where the sky glows is it strange the eyes of men linger ?

For review in the next section we have : *New Poems and Old*, by Muriel Stuart (Edwin Valentine Mitchell) ; *This Side of Avalon*, by Glenn Ward Dresbach (Harold Vinal, Ltd.) ; *The White Peacock*, by Clement Wood (Harold Vinal, Ltd.) ; *Stone Dust*, by Frank Ernest Hill (Longmans, Green & Company) ; *Aromacy*, by Faith Van Valkenburgh Vilas (Dorrance & Co.) ; *Equinox*, by Elizabeth Curtis (Harold Vinal, Ltd.) ; *Interludes in Chaos*, by John Kingston Fineran (Provincial Press, New Orleans) ; *A Woman at Dusk*, by Arthur Stringer (The Bobbs-Merrill Co.) ; *Compass Rose*, by Elizabeth Coatsworth (Coward — McCann, Inc.) ; *The Hermit Thrust*, by Kathleen Millay (Horace Liveright).

Leighton Rollin's summer theatre, the Surrey Playhouse, opens near Bar Harbour this summer. Mr. Rollins has promised an article for THE POETRY REVIEW. This enterprise of a dramatic and poetic nature is backed by such names as : Governor and Mrs. William Tudor Gardner, Mrs. John W. Alexander, Miss Margaret Anglin, Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. Coburn, Miss Rachel Crothers, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Satterlee, Mr. Charles Rann Kennedy, Miss Edith Wynne Matthison, Miss Evan le Gallienne, Mr. Channing Pollock, Clifton D. Gray, Pres. Bates College ; H. S. Boardman, Pres. University of Maine ; Kenneth C. M. Sills, Pres. Bowdoin College ; Professor Mark Bailey, University of Maine.

* * * * * * *

" Remote, exclusive and exquisite, Emily Dickinson's position in the literature of poetry is unique. She burned with the fire of a very personal emotion and has left behind to the reading world fine evidences of her having passed this way. I emphasise ' reading-world,' for nothing of hers has become the public property of the general world. Perhaps it is not great enough . . . perhaps it is too soon to

know! It is not yet a half-century since her death in the university town of Amherst." (I am quoting from the second Dynamics.)

"Out of her home in Amherst she rarely stepped, out of Amherst still more rarely. About her is mystery, and not even the recent volumes of her complete poems with an introduction by Martha Dickinson Bianchi (Little Brown & Co., 1925) or *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* by the same niece (Houghton Mifflin Co.) lift completely the veil or shadow. Direct and passionate and shy, we learn to think of her as we seek to penetrate beyond her walled garden —to search her out and know her for ourselves—now that she is gone." The publishing of the new book, brings one to a cross-road in the matter of producing, undirected by the writer, from the cloister of their seclusion, a writer's poem!

The reading world has been thereby the gainer in several notable instances, but, ethically are we justified in doing this? Is it not an infringement of the true loyalty to the vanished poet? I believe it to be. Reading eagerly her beautiful pages, honorably, I must say this.

"A treasure trove of Emily Dickinson's genius at its best," says Robert Hillyer. "Emily Dickinson is much the best of women poets and comes near the crown of all poetry," says Mark Van Doren in the *Nation*.

In the preface, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, niece of Miss Dickinson, and editor of the volume, tells us "When the little, unexplored package gave up these poems of Emily Dickinson which her sister, Lavinia, saw fit never to publish, it was for one breathless instant as if the bright apparition of Emily had returned to the old house, with the bees and birds still busy beneath her window, to salute us with her wings. Many of the pages are difficult to read. Some of the writing is in the shy character of her girlish habit; others are so bold there are but two words on a line and the ink not yet faded."

Mme. Bianchi meets the question we have just asked in this way: "It is certain that to destroy them would be heresy to the faith of her following."

One must not quote from utterances so perfect. Here are two in their entirety, and if ever the word dynamic were applicable, it is in relation to her genius which possesses, integrally, promises of fire.

"I've known a Heaven like a tent
To wrap its shining yards,
Pluck up its stakes and disappear
Without the sound of boards
Or rip of nail, or carpenter,
But just the miles of stare
That signalize a show's retreat
In North America.

"No trace, no figment of the thing
That dazzled yesterday,

No ring, no marvel;
Men and feats
Desolved as utterly
As birds' far navigation
Discloses just a hue;
A plash of oars—a gaiety,
Then swallowed up to view."

"I took one draught of life,
I'll tell you what I paid,
Precisely an existence—
The market price, they said.

"They weighed me, dust by dust,
They balanced film with film,
Then handed me my being's worth—
A single dram of Heaven."

The phrase "New England conscience" has gained credence all over the world . . . it is, then, small wonder that the emotional records of that conscious through poetry should be a FINE ARRAY. Foremost and fondest among the women who have spoken through poetry presides the immortal Emily Dickinson.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

THE MINOR POET

GOD of love, have pity
On him whom Thou hast curst
With longing for the highest,
A hunger, and a thirst:

On him whom Thou hast given
A lute he cannot play;
A heart aflame with beauty
His dumbness doth betray:

A soul that's set for singing
And lips with no refrain—
Dear God of love, have pity
Upon his easeless pain!

DOROTHEA GRAHAM BOTHA.

£50 ($250) PRIZES FOR POEMS ON POWER.

Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, the American Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW, offers through THE REVIEW a prize of $250 for the best poem on Power in its broadest acceptance as evinced by such individual personalities as Edison, the Wright Brothers, Marconi, Mussolini, Roosevelt, Elihu Root, Bernard Shaw, George Grey Barnard, Foch, Genl. Haig, Lord Nelson, Baldwin, Macdonald, Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Sargent, and a score of others.

The poems may concern not only the genius of to-day, but the genius of the past, and a prophetic outlook on the future.

The first prize will be $150; second $50; third $25; and the balance at the discretion of the adjudicators. The contest is open to all, and will close October 15th, 1929. Manuscripts should be typed; the name and address of the authors written on the upper left corner, and should be addressed to Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, Convener, 299 Park Avenue, New York. More than one poem may be sent. As we have reason to know, Mrs. Bartlett favours the sonnet form, but any form is acceptable. The shorter poems are desired. No MSS. will be returned, but unsuccessful poems are the property of the authors after the contest is closed and prizes awarded.

POEMS ON THE HUMAN EYE.

Mr. Walter K. Lewis, undeterred by the absence of imitators of his generous encouragement of his colleagues of The Poets' Fellowship, provides another three guineas, suggesting that the subject should be "The Human Eye"—that wonderful organ which is responsible for so much joy and admiration in human life. According to Byron, "it fires and sins and sleeps" and many other things besides. What they are and their significance provide material for thought and we invite poems, which should be epigrammatic and not too physiological, and which should reach us not later than September 25th, addressed "The Lewis Premium, THE POETRY REVIEW, 16 Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.1."

We are sorry that at the moment of going to press the Music Lyrics awards have not been settled.

A life-member of The Poetry Society, Sir Edward Brotherton, whose niece, Mrs. Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, has been a contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW, was among the new peers in the recent Birthday Honours List.

POETRY AND DRAMA.

IF the man in the street were to be asked when the drama became of national importance in Ireland, his answer would probably be hundreds of years too early. It is astounding, but true, that there was no National Theatre in Ireland before the last few years of the nineteenth century. Its progress from that time, up till the present day, is set down in one of the most interesting books on the Drama that we have ever read, *The Irish Drama* 1896-1928, by Andrew E. Malone, Constable, 15s. Mr. Malone, who is well known in England, Ireland, and the United States, as a dramatic critic, has produced a book which is not only a study of the drama in Ireland, but also a witty and penetrating commentary on Ireland and the Irish. He begins by giving a startling list of comedy writers who have flourished, or still flourish in England, who are indebted to Ireland by birth or by education for their genius. The names should come as a shock to those who regard comedy as a British branch of the Theatre. They include Congreve, Farquhar, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, and G. B. Shaw, the essence of a very representative history of comedy in England. Irishmen always have something interesting to talk about, and they always spice their conversation with the wit that is their national heritage; for this reason the dialogue produced by these men will always be "good theatre," and since prophets find no honour at home, their true popularity will remain in non-Irish theatres. Nevertheless, it seems strange that a civilization so old as that of Ireland should not have taken more interest in this realm of art.

The beginning of the Irish "renaissance" in the latter half of the nineteenth century was signalised by the formation of the Irish Literary Society, followed closely by the Irish Literary Theatre. The performance of *Deirdre* by "A.E." (G. W. Russell) and W. B. Yeats' *Kathleen ni Houlihan* in Dublin in April, 1902, marked the real start of the Irish National Theatre: "for the first time plays were written by Irish playwrights, acted by an Irish company, and staged by an Irish producer." The company visited London in 1903, and during a successful tour, both artistically and financially, they enlisted the attention and interest of Miss A. E. F. Horniman, described by Mr. Frank Vernon as "the Queen of Repertory." It was the financial support of Miss Horniman, coupled with the unquenchable enthusiasm of Lady Gregory, and the intellectual keenness of W. B. Yeats, George Moore, and Edward Martyn, that enabled the Irish Literary Theatre to enlarge its scope into the forming of the National movement which has its head-quarters at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. It particularly touches the interests of The Poetry Society, in passing, that Mr. Yeats' ideal was really the founding of a little theatre where romantic plays could be acted, and fine words be spoken finely. Although the theatre for which he hoped was to have been in or near London, had it not been for his verse plays and the interest Lady Gregory took in them, the Irish National Theatre might never have come into existence. May we here mention that The Poetry Society also has its dreams—

visions of just such a theatre in London, as that for which Mr. Yeats hoped, where verse-speaking might hold court. Our production of Stephen Phillips' *Harold*, noticed in this issue, has brought us a few inches on the long road that lies ahead. It is our prayer that there may be some who will make straight the way for us.

Mr. Malone tells his story in the most fascinating manner. He is never the dramatic critic alone. He has a power of standing away from his country, and seeing its characteristics, good and bad, with a wonderfully impartial eye. One thing in particular we notice, and we are grateful to Mr. Malone for pointing it out. It is this : " Ireland is not a freak among the nations of Europe, and the ' Celtic Twilight ' is no more than ' the mist that does be on the bog ' ". That is worth remembering, more especially as it comes from the pen of an Irishman.

The Irish National Theatre became self supporting in 1910—when Miss Horniman withdrew her help—under the directorship of Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, who had acted with them, having died in 1909. Twelve years later, in 1922, Mr. Lennox Robinson joined the two original members of the board, and is still associated with the theatre as producer. There is no space here for the story of the vicissitudes of the Irish companies, at home and abroad, for any account of the extraordinary receptions accorded to *The Playboy of the Western World*, or for the details of the changes in management at the Abbey Theatre. Suffice it to say, that since 1924 it has been subsidised by Dail Eireann, and that the Peacock Theatre has been added to it for the purpose of experimental work in dramatic construction and ideas.

One of Mr. Malone's great qualities is the ease with which he describes the plots of the plays he mentions. There is nothing more difficult than this, as all who have attempted it will know, and Mr. Malone's terse summaries are models of their kind. His wit, and his fearless criticism make his book an invaluable contribution to the history of the Drama, and to the history of Ireland, and it is our hope that one day England may bring it about that the Abbey Theatre of Dublin shall not be " the only state-subsidised theatre in the English-speaking world." At the end of the book will be found a useful appendix giving the date of every first production since the foundation of The Irish Literary Theatre, and a complete list of dramatists, with names of their plays, and dates of production.

Whatever mist there may be hanging about the bog in Ireland, and however untrue this business of Celtic Twilight may be, the mist that sweeps down the glens of Scotland has been allowed to stay where it is by Mr. Gordon Bottomley. Legend, or even history made faery by " the kind touch of time " has an irresistible appeal for all sensible people, and also for Mr. Bottomley, who is of course a sensible person. In his eight *Scenes and Plays*, also published by Constable (6s.) he has

given us six dramatised versions of Scotch tales. The first two scenes in the book, are different, and in our opinion inferior. They deal with matters of fact (or rather matters that are not so unusual), and they do not seem to carry off their poetic medium with such success as do the more eerie and airy characteristics of the six we have mentioned. The author affects us closely when he speaks, in his notes, of the " revived and reorientated art of verse-speaking," and we are glad to think that this book was written expressly for verse-speakers—for those " who had learnt how to find beauty in their voices and furtherance in poetic metres, how to act with their voices and how to deduce beautiful and significant bodily movement from the rhythms of their speech."

The After-world of the Poets (The Epworth Press, 5s.) is an attempt by Leslie D. Weatherhead to assess the contribution of several great nineteenth-century poets to the idea of man's immortality. This is a subject of which first-hand knowledge is doubtless denied to all but a few of us, though theologian and philosopher pretend to some theories upon it, while the poet—like a certain monk of old—time and again reaches the world's end and poking his head through the blue sky takes a look at what lies beyond.

Mr. Weatherhead begins with a study of the idea of a future life in the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley, examples of those who, at the beginning of last century were discarding the orthodox ideas upon immortality ; he goes on to Tennyson's theories upon the subject in a chapter called " A new projection of Christian thought born of the fear of death " ; he analyses the varying degrees of doubt and incredulity of Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and comes finally to Browning, in whose religious philosophy the conviction of immortality plays so dominant a part. The material has been collected with great care and industry, as Professor Peake says in his foreword, and almost every line these poets wrote referring to a future existence is weighed and account taken of its context and the period in the poet's life when it was written; but, despite his assiduity, the author seems to have accomplished little of importance. Is not this due to the fact that groups of lines snatched from his poems can never give the poet's complete ideas on any one subject ? He not only uses the intellectual content of words to convey his meaning, but depends as much or more, upon sound, form, rhythm and other " sweet influences."

Two volumes of verse by pitmen, *In Quiet Fields*, by Robert Crawford (Porpoise Press, 3s. 6d.) and *Out of the Coal-Fields*, by Frederick C. Boden, (Dent, 3s. 6d.), make interesting comparison. The title that each writer has chosen for his book is indicative of his mental outlook. Both have yearned for peace while living in the turmoil of industrialism ; both have now ceased to work underground and have

reached a haven of comparative ease. Mr. Crawford, who appeared first in THE POETRY REVIEW, has reached the further haven of a quiet mind and shares some lovely thought with us—though that goes indifferently dressed in places, but that appears in a verbal habilment of equal beauty in the Sonnet Sequence, " Eve," from which " The Creation of Eve " is taken :

So it was willed, and Adam fell asleep
  In his white Eden, lonely beyond name,
  But while he slept, into his being came
The shape of God, ingathered from the deep,
And took from him a rib and made it leap
  To the last glory even God could frame. . . .
  A woman, naked as a radiant flame,
Came softly this first tryst of love to keep.

For Adam saw her as a lily chaste,
  Dressed inaccessibly in thoughts all pure,
With little breasts and unclasped virgin waist,
  Waiting she knew not why—in pause demure—
The half-felt bond, as lovers shy to taste
  The happiness of touch that can make sure.

Mr. Boden's spirit remains still within the coal-fields and cries out from thence with great bitterness. His desire is to alleviate the sufferings and redress the wrongs of his one-time companions, and he has given us some poignant glimpses of life in the pits and their environment. His verse, while to some extent emulating the simplicity of style of some well-known writers, has yet a distinct note of its own, and his themes elicit our ready sympathy. I feel, however, that the poignancy of his situations would have been enhanced had he occasionally presented the brighter side of the miner's life ; for there is a brighter side even though the dark side is every bit as sordid as he has depicted it. The following lines are taken from No. XIV :

Her boy halts where the pass-by curves and dips
  Holding his tram back with his naked breast,
To wipe the coal-dust from his young red lips,
  Closing his eyes, snatching a minute's rest.

There, fifteen hundred feet below the ground,
  Alone, a sleepy stripling quite foredone,
His face black with the grime blowing around,
  Grey streaks behind his ears where sweat has run,

He stands with shoulders bent, head hung awry,
  Bought by a company for his body's worth,
A schoolboy in a tunnel four feet high,
  There, fifteen hundred feet down in the earth.

Toad of Toad Hall, by A. A. Milne (Methuen, 5s.)—a play from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, and written at that author's own suggestion—can best be eulogized by quoting from Mr. Milne's own prefatory words :—" I have, I hope, made some sort of entertainment, with enough of Kenneth Grahame in it to appease his many admirers, and enough of me in it to justify my own name upon the title page." This is just what he has most inimitably done.

In *Top o' the World*, by Nelda Sage (Dent, 4s. 6d.), the author exclaims :

> Oh, could I tell you
> How all this vast glory
> Speaks to my soul !

and it is unfortunate that the desire does not come nearer fulfilment than a pleasant articulation which is partly dissipated by the irritation of needlessly chopped up lines.

The Veiled Door, by Caroline Giltinan (Macmillan), is largely epigrammatic in form but not in tone, the poems being terse yet tender. They are sensitive, too, especially to suffering and religious mystery. This is an interesting quatrain on " Hearing Kreisler " :

> Were I shut away from sound,
> Melody no more to know,
> My starving ears would ask my eyes
> To watch the rhythm of his bow.

A Book of Lancing Verse (Blackwell, 4s. 6d.), contains verse written by Lancing men of all ages. Some of it is excellent and some of it very amusing. Though invidious to single out one or two writers from among the thirty or more contributors, it is impossible to refrain from admiring the finished sonnets of Arthur Reade and quoting Derek Barnes' " The Dark Thorn " :

> Stark the Dark Thorn standeth,
> Bent and bleak and stark ;
> And never a bird sings to her
> From dawn to dark.
>
> Ah, the winter's cold breath
> Twists the tortured limb ;
> Yet the Dark Thorn standeth
> Gaunt and game and grim !
>
> I have seen her branches
> Writhing to the sky
> And had my heart melt in me
> As I went by.

And, on a bitter morning,
I have seen her stand
Bleak and bare and barren,
Lonely in the land.

But, at the wane of winter,
Ere yet I felt the Spring,
—Rich and white and lovely
Was the Dark Thorn blossoming.

And I would strip for torture
And seek the bitter blows
That brought me to such blossom
As the Dark Thorn shows.

Of the promise shown in Robert Glennie's poems, all that can be said, with true regret, is, " The rest is silence."

There are certain Americans who have an undefined and undefinable quality known as " It." Although " It " is at present reserved for the use of film stars, there is no reason why the privilege should not be extended to poets. Mr. Bliss Carman has " It." As the film stars who have " It " do as other men do with that extra touch of genius that puts them above their fellows, so Mr. Carman writes poetry about the subjects dear to other poets, inbuing his lines with his magnetic personality (*Wild Garden*, The Bodley Head, 6s.). He writes about the moon, and the wind, and the trees ; he is obsessed with " the music of nature " and all its attendant similes—but his poetry has the intangible difference that marks the work of a great artist. Not many poets can write lines such as these two—and get away with it :

" No mere Heaven can detain me when I hear a wood-thrush sing . . .
It is May, and God is walking through Connecticut with Spring,"

and it is seldom that we meet stanzas so original and interesting as the first of " After a Parting " :

" What ails the air in Denmark,
And darkness all the day ?
There is a gloom upon the place,
Since Hamlet went away."

A selection of the best Elizabethan poetry would, like the Greek Anthology, sum up the whole of life. Most Englishmen in the sixteenth century, and a dwindling force of them in the seventeenth century, were men of action and poets, musicians, and discoverers simultaneously. They adventured among the arts with the same freedom as upon the high seas. The making of poetry was considered

so natural an accomplishment of the Elizabethan gentleman that he took no trouble to publish it and thought anything but anonymous publication rather discreditable. In this way the works of several poets who were considered masters by their contemporaries have been lost to us, and many doubtful poems have been assigned to the wrong authors. We have only a pirated edition of Shakespeare's sonnets.

Sir Walter Ralegh was one of those who, though known during his life as a brilliant poet, was most careless of his poems. He is an example of all that was finest in Elizabeth's England. He was a great explorer, soldier, and statesman, a magnificent courtier, a musician, chemist, historian, and poet. His contemporaries admired and his own men adored him ; he had few powerful enemies until the accession of James I, but thenceforth misfortune and injustice never ceased to dog his footsteps. With all his brilliance he was, as A. M. C. Latham says in her edition of *Poems of Sir Walter Ralegh* (Constable, 16s.), " not a man of achievement but a man of promise, a quickening spirit. His world is, and was, the world of the creative imagination. To such a man poetry is perhaps not the chief end of life ; but it is as natural as breathing."

This young writer has accomplished a necessary piece of work making, for the first time, an adequate collection of Ralegh's poems. They present particularly difficult problems as to text and authorship, and Miss Latham has dealt with each of these thoroughly and successfully. She has given full notes and a brief statement with regard to the authenticity of each poem ; where the evidence points against Ralegh's authorship, but is too vague for certainty, the poems are included in a section classed as " Doubtful Poems " ; wherever possible the earliest published text is given. The book is a scholarly production, but not in the least dull, and the opening appreciation of Ralegh himself is a penetrating piece of criticism and an adequate introduction to the gravity and beauty of his poetry.

The volumes in the Hogarth Lectures series have maintained in each instance a high standard, both in style and content, but the ninth and most recent book on the list, *Nature in Literature*, by Edmund Blunden, seems to us the most pleasing yet produced. Though, being but a brief survey of some parts of a huge subject, it is not so deep in learning as its predecessors, the book that Mr. Blunden has given us is very charming. It is by a lover of lovers of nature for lovers of nature—a book which is filled with witty and perceptive comment on on many things—a book that is supremely easy to read. Mr. Blunden's discerning criticism covers all the branches of nature writing—though, unfortunately, he has had to omit many nature writers—and he gives us a hope of a further volume which will add to this study. We quote one passage only : " It is possible sometimes to mistake Wordsworth for the Creator rather than the created, and he has a

tendency to give Nature a penny for her amusing prattle and tell her to run along now like a good girl."

Those poets—they are mostly poets—with whom Mr. Blunden deals, write about Nature exclusively. They do not often introduce any personal interests—such as love, for instance. We have before us this month a book by a new nature poet, who, on the other hand, is distinctly romantic. He is G. L. Bevan, and in his book *Russet and Asp* (Duckworth, 8s. 6d.) he shows that he has a well-expressed love for the beauties of field and wood. He can also be deplorably sentimental, and sometimes he uses the most charming words. This is probably the result of his wide knowledge and scholarship, which are apparent throughout the book, and will surprise those who knew him in another connection. We much prefer him as a poet of nature. Here is just one verse from " Magic " :

There's a night 'twixt spring and summer,
On the lips of May and June,
When the warblers are full-throated
And the cuckoo's still in tune,
When the Milky Way's entangled
In the meshes of the thorn,
And a tipsy south wind's babbling
That the first red rose is born.

Mr. Charles R. Jury, in his *Love and the Virgins* (Oxford University Press, 5s.) has written the best poetic drama that we have read for a long time. His diction is striking, and he manages to keep an Olympian subject delightfully earthbound. In telling the story of the love of Helen for Agapenor, he gives us a set of clever character sketches. The hero and heroine, though inclined to be formal in style, have beautiful poetry to speak—lines not overloaded with the florid imagery that is so often the lot of mythological drama—while the presentation of Phædrus and Silenus, both addicted to drink, one a fool, the other a philosopher, is witty and interesting. Mr. Jury has drawn a good poet in Musæus, and Artemis, as is only fitting, considering her place in the play, has her full share of the beauty of the verse. There are two very jolly companionable young satyrs, who, with a chorus, favoured with several excellent lyrics, complete more important members of the cast. Even if never presented on the stage, this play should find its way to many libraries. " A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

We do not believe that any poet, however minor, would admit that the writing of verse could be taught. We welcome, nevertheless, the fourth edition of George J. H. Northcroft's *How to Write Verse* (Herbert Jenkins, 3s. 6d.), revised and enlarged, with an introduction by Iolo Williams. Though this book contains doctrines which are

not in accordance with our standards and ideals, it also gives useful information as to metres, rhythms, and rhymes. We know that there are verse writers who work out these details with meticulous care, and to them this book will be of value—but we warn them to keep clear of the rhyming dictionary at the end; neither must they believe that THE POETRY REVIEW, at any rate, is sympathetically inclined towards the recommendation of such cliches as "Sea-girt isle," "vasty deep" or "trailing garments of the night."

The Singing Lass, by Marion Angus (Porpoise Press, 3s. 6d.) is a book of songs from the north of Scotland. Most of them are written in dialect, but these are not, as is so often the case with Scots writers any more successful than the five or six English poems at the end of the book. They are simple, but sincere, and often a fresh turn of thought is given to an old theme. There is plenty of colour in this poetry, and Miss Angus has an ear for word music. The volume is worthy of the Scottish poetical revival. I give the poem that names it:

O lucky penny a mile ayont the mill
I lifted frae the mosses o' the moor,
Auld an' bent and twisted, I tent ye in the hoor
That the stranger lass cam' singin' ower the hill.

My luve sits in her bien hoose sae modest as a floo'er
A lily floo'er that's growin' in the shade,
The wind that blaws her can'el blaws through a ragged plaid;
The singin' lass gangs lauchin' by the door.

My luve she sleeps sae quait 'neath the munelicht's milky beams,
White and sweet on linen sheets, till dawn comes to the east.
O lucky penny that's swingin' on the breist
O' the singin' lass wha's liltin' thro' my dreams!

Shutting Eleanor Farjeon's book, *A Collection of Poems* (Collins, 7s. 6d.) is like shutting one's door after a long ramble in the country. One has memories of winds and light, seas and woods, encounters with friendly villages and friendly folk. And although a muffin-man and a coster have somehow flitted through our wanderings, yet we have never been far from the Sussex Downs.

"Oh the slopes all seemed to run,
And the sunlight ran as well,
Where the small brown deer were running
On the hills of Arundel.

"The winds of earth and heaven
Were running low and high,
Where the river ran the valley
And white clouds ran the sky—

" And my heart ran like a messenger
With happy news to tell,
While my feet ran with the running deer
On the hills of Arundel."

Miss Farjeon can say something charming about almost anything she sees :

" As I peeped out of Paradise
The round earth I did see—
Oh, *there's* a pretty toy, I cried,
A pretty toy for me !

" 'Twas painted gay as rainbows are,
But mostly blue an green,
And there were flowers and animals
And people in between,"

might have been written of herself—perhaps it is. She has not only something good and original to say, but she says it charmingly, and though occasionally she leaves a ragged edge, most of her work is extremely satisfactory. She can pack a whole countryside, a life story, a close description, into a few verses without a sign of cramping. This surely is the sign of the true poet. Most of her poems are short, but in "Colin Clout Come Home Again," a longer one, she gives a glimpse of her philosophy, and of her hope for England.

There are so many lovely and entertaining things in this collection that it is hard to know where to quote ; but the following cannot easily be beaten :

Argus was a puppy,
Frisking full of joy.
Ulysses was his master
Who sailed away to Troy.

Argus on the seashore
Watched the ship's white track,
And barked a little puppy-bark
To bring his master back.

Argus was an old dog,
Too grey and tired for tears.
He lay outside the house-door
And watched for twenty years.

When twenty years were ended
Ulysses came from Troy,
Argus wagged an old dog's way
And then he died for joy.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

For some time the monthly premium has been awarded to poems distinguished on some such ground as their (comparative) optimism, their lyrical sincerity, their dignity, and so on. It is a long time since we have had a poem deserving of the award solely because of its originality. The entries this month have been of a very high standard, and it has been an interesting competition to decide. The entries were eventually reduced to four poems, all of which seemed at first sight to be worthy of the premium, all of which were entirely different in form and content. It has at length been decided to divide the premium once more—unequally on this occasion. A prize of one guinea goes to Julia Boynton Green, for "Xanthippe Complains to a Neighbour," and half a guinea each is awarded to John Silver and Winifred Bourne, for "To Amaryllis," and "The Death of Proserpina." The winner has crowded a very clever piece of characterisation and a moment of real drama into a vignette of fourteen lines. Her poem is a spontaneous and effective fragment. The other two have originally and charm, but they lack the brilliance of the first. The list of commended entries is small but distinguished.

Very Highly Commended.
Rev. S. V. Green

Highly Commended.
A. E. Dewey
Silvia Dobson
Atherton Nichols
M. A. Rowland

Commended.
B. Annakin
H. Drabble
Gwen Levy
Redcliffe McKie
John Purdie
A. D. L. Wilson
Mary A. Woodward

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," the Poets' Fellowship, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, before August 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, or international coupon, and, if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. should be sent.)

Very few of the members of our fellowship have responded to our request for the names of the short POETRY REVIEW poems of recent years that they have enjoyed the most. Amongst those that have been mentioned are: "If this Green Earth," "Prayer for Joy Unspent," "An Offering," "Lost Skill," "The Vagabond," "Lincoln," "Dreams," "To a Handful of Anemone Petals," "A Winter Sunset," "Evening Song," "The Bermudas," and "La Pucelle de Dieu." We hope that this month many more will be so good as to let us have their preferences, since it is proposed to publish these poems in a small anthology.

Mrs. Beatrice Eve's article on the aesthetic lyric is very satisfactorily illustrated by her own book of verse, *Moths in the Candlelight*, published late in June by Elkin Mathews and Marrot at 3s. 6d. Mrs. Eve includes several poems that have appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day*, and the impression that the book leaves, is to quote Mrs. Eve's own words, that the æsthetic lyric is " a musical version of the modern water-colour, a bright, cleverly designed picture."

Mr. A. J. G. Russell has become associate-editor of *Poetry of To-day*, to which he has been a frequent contributor. Mr. Russell, who is a grandson of Lord John, the Victorian Prime Minister, and a cousin of the Hon. Bertrand, is a Balliol man trained in the law, and he acknowledges his indebtedness to the Senior Critic of The Poets' Fellowship, whose criticism and advice he found most helpful when making his earlier essays in poetry. He now becomes keen editor and scrutineer, eager to discover good work, anxious to find the perfect poem, able to preserve and raise the high standard of the unique periodical now under his literary supervision.

In a series of verse competitions on Scottish cities, run by *The Daily Record and Mail*, Mr. T. B. Crawford's poem on Paisley gained the prize. The competition produced some good work, and it may be mentioned that Mr. Lewis Spence contributed (successfully, of course) to the competition on Edinburgh. Mr. Crawford, in a letter to The Fellowship, makes a good point in the following comment :— " Considering how few really good *long* poems there are, and what superlative skill they require, I would like to see more *short* poems in the REVIEW. It seems to me that the less pretentious poems are more suited to the compass of your premium contributors and for the enjoyment of your readers. Even a minor poet can reach sublimity in a few lines, but long poems can seldom be perfect throughout, if indeed the expression " long poem " is not a contradiction of terms."

* * *

At Messrs. Hodgson's Sale Rooms on June 21, the series of 17 unpublished letters, from Byron to Edward Dawkins, Chargé d'affaires at Florence, relating to the " Pisan Affray," mostly written from Pisa, March-July, 1822, was bought by Mr. Gabriel Wells for £1,700. A letter from Mary Shelley to E. Dawkins, Pisa, August 21, 1822, referring to her husband and son, fetched £122 (Quaritch). Among the letters from Coleridge to James Gillman, one dated October 9, 1825, realized £170 (Temple Scott), and one written on July 24, 1830, 11 hours before the poet's death, £100 (Spencer). The MS. of Coleridge's " The Three Graves " (Parts I and II), 16 pages, fetched £590 (G. Wells); and a copy of Coleridge's " Christabel; Kubla Khan," 1816, inscribed by the author to Miss Wayte, £190 (Drake).

IN MEMORIAM

Katharine Lee Bates.

THE death, on March 28th, of Miss Katharine Lee Bates has deprived the Poets' Fellowship of one of its most gifted writers the realm of scholarship of a brilliant and accurate student, and the world of a character that devoted all her talents, unstintingly, to large and uplifting causes, to good wherever recognized.

Born in Falmouth, Massachusetts, August 12th, 1859, Miss Bates passed her entire life in the Commonwealth. As one of the brilliant students in the early days of the struggle for college education for women, Miss Bates was identified with Wellesley College in the year 1876; in 1880 she took her degree; and, as Instructor, Associate Professor and Professor of English Literature she taught until 1925. In that year she was made Professor Emeritus and lived near the college until her death.

Her poems were on varied topics—Nature, places dear to her in the Old World, pets, associations with her beloved Spain, characters and influences in the field of literature: in her own country, however, she is best known by her poem, "America the Beautiful."

The volumes of her poems are: *America the Beautiful*, 1911; *Fairy Gold*, 1916; *The Retinue*, 1918; *Yellow Clover*, 1922; *Little Robin Stay Behind*, 1923; *The Pilgrim Ship*, 1926.

Miss Bates was Vice-Chairman of the Boston Centre of the Poetry Society of England; and, at the meeting held after her death, a tribute was read to her memory. Among her poems is the following sonnet, "America to England," which, voicing her feeling for England, may fittingly find a place here.

"Who would trust England, let him lift his eyes
To Nelson, columned o'er Trafalgar Square,
Her hieroglyph of duty, written where
The roar of traffic hushes to the skies;
Or mark, while Paul's vast shadow softly lies
On Gordon's statued sleep, how praise and prayer
Flush through the frank young faces clustering there
To con that kindred rune of sacrifice.

"O England, no bland cloud-ship in the blue,
But rough oak plunging on o'er perilous jars
Of reef and ice, our faith will follow you
The more for tempest roar that strains your spars
And splits your canvas, be your helm but true,
Your courses shapen by the eternal stars."

Mrs. Hugh Spender, who formed and presided over the Chelsea Centre of The Poetry Society, died on June 8th from pneumonia at Geneva, where she had lived for some time in consequence of her husband's official connection with the League of Nations.

THE POETRY SOCIETY AND THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE.

The following letter from the Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, dated April 24th, 1929, was received by the Executive Council of The Poetry Society with great gratification and ordered to be printed in THE POETRY REVIEW :—

" At a meeting of the Executive Council of the Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre held yesterday, it was reported that, by means of the competitions which the Poetry Society very kindly carried out in aid of our Rebuilding and Endowment Fund, a sum of £450 net had been subscribed.

" I was instructed by the Executive Council to ask you to be good enough to convey to the Council of the Poetry Society at their next meeting our very sincere thanks for having raised this very substantial sum.

" I was further instructed to inform you that, as a slight mark of appreciation, it was unanimously resolved that your Society should be requested to nominate a representative to join our Governing Body and it was suggested, subject of course to the approval of your Council, that your President-General should act, *ex-officio*, in this capacity.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgnd.) ARCHIBALD FLOWER.

To the General Secretary, *Chairman.*
The Poetry Society (Incorporated).

The Lady Maud Warrender accepted nomination and was duly elected the representative of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) on the Governing Body of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, with the re-building and use of which the Society is proud to be directly and officially identified.

* * *

The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Fund is to benefit from the proceeds of the sale of the *Stratford Anthology* (Harrap, 7s. 6d.), a collection of the favourite quotations of eminent people. Ronald Petrie is the compiler and the contributors include soldiers, statesmen, painters and philosophers. The selections often shed new light on the characters of their choosers ; many are extremely opposite . . . what could be better suited to what we know of Rosita Forbes, for example, than four lines from *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* ? Some verses from Job 38 are the perfect choice for the Astronomer Royal. Other quotations are surprising. A student of Freud would not perhaps expect to find that his favourite lines should be " Full Fathom Five." Commendatore Luigi Villari has a happy choice in

> " Set we forward : let
> A Roman and a British ensign wave
> Friendly together."

(*Continued on p.* 308.)

MISS EDITH EVANS ON VERSE SPEAKING

MISS EDITH EVANS in announcing that no medal had been awarded at the Gold Medal Examination held at the Swedenborg Hall, Hart Street, on May 14th, said there was a great tendency among the candidates to speak far too slowly and with too high a pitch causing them to exhaust themselves, and in several cases their audience, before they were half-way through the poem. She pointed out the necessity for having a definite colour scheme and definite pattern running through the poem. "It is not sufficient just to learn the poem off by heart, you must first get the whole pattern on a large scale—make up your mind what the poet really means, then fit in the smaller patterns into the large one. There must be a definite pattern in everything, even in ordering meals and playing games, if one concentrated all one's energy on ordering the soup and fish the rest of the meal would be a very dull affair."

Another mistake that frequently occurred was that full value was not given to line-endings—the candidates ran the words into the next line, thus breaking the rhythm—the audience must hear the *end* of the lines.

"You should not put so much hard work into the poem, do not *feel* so much; the poet should show the feeling through the poem; above all avoid working with the face—you are the jars in which the lovely flowers are set—that is the difference between drama and poetry—in the latter you have only to be a lovely instrument on which the poet plays. Most of you do too much—you put what *you* think into the lines and emphasize words that are quite unnecessary. Leave the poet to speak through you.

"The rhythm of the poems should be so very marked that one should be able to conduct you as though you were an orchestra.

"Candidates should trouble just a little more over the words. Poetry is made up of words—lovely words—you can read action through the medium of words. The poem should possess you and not you possess the poem. The chief faults this afternoon are too much emphasis, too slow utterance, and omission of definite rhythm. After all the medal is only a recognition, the real thing to you all is the speaking of poetry and if you will just remember these few points I feel sure it will become much easier to you all and you will love it even more than now."

Miss Evans very kindly and helpfully gave each candidate a personal constructive criticism.

* * *

It has been suggested that the Poetry Society's insistence on restraint in verse speaking and condemnati on of artificiality and flamboyancy has led to excessive self-repression and the dullness which has characterized recent gold medal examinations. No remarks or advice by the Society's examiners can be cited to justify this impression, which is a mistaken exaggeration of the Society's verse-speaking policy.

What is desired is real artistry, not showy superficiality, and what it means may be described in some recent remarks by Mr. St. John Ervine, which may be fitly applied to verse-speaking. "Great art does not flourish on flamboyance," Mr. Ervine pointed out. "It comes out of quietness, out of long thought, out of garnered ideas, out of brooding and discipline, and a rigorous rejection of vulgar indulgences. It is the lovely flower that comes after the soil has been carefully tilled and watered and fertilized and made free of weeds. It comes after pain and labour and long, dull periods of fallow, and it springs out of inscrutable darkness into glowing light. It is humble and proud; it needs little because it contains much; and it glorifies without distinction of creed or of class. It is exclusive and individual, yet it is common and to be enjoyed by all. It comes out of the world's heart and is the single sure sign that man was created in the image of God. It makes men and women willing to endure hunger and thirst for its sake, to be broken and impoverished by it; but even when it starves them, it glorifies them. Art is all these things, and it does all these things."

* * *

Teachers of voice production and speech trainers will find encouragement and justification of their important work in the words of an independent authority, Benjamin Jowett, the great Master of Balliol, who pointed out that "speech is not a separate faculty, but the expression of all our faculties, to which all our other powers of expression, signs, looks, gestures, lend their aid, of which the instrument is not the tongue only, but more than half the human frame." And in words that Miss Edith Evans might have used to recent Gold Medal candidates, he added, "The greatest lesson which the philosophical analysis of language teaches us is, that we should be above language, making words our servants, and not allowing them to be our masters."

* * *

MINSHALL CHALLENGE CUP COMPETITION, JUNE 11TH, 1929.

Judge's Remarks

First on the Candidates separately and then on the Competition as a whole:—

1st * * (95 per cent.). *Rt. Hon. Sir Maurice de Bunsen:* Winner of Cup.

Rhythm, interpretation, love of poetry, and appreciation of the subject all of a high order; also quality of voice. (Stars for rhythm and interpretation.)

2nd. (94 per cent.) *Miss Grazia Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.* Winner of Trophy.

In both poems the voice might be a trifle sweeter.

In first poem: Pronunciation slightly faulty and not a full appreciation of the subject in its more subtle bearings (very difficult for so young a candidate); but these defects fully made up by the second poem.

In second poem : A high order of artistic ability and soul feeling shown in this candidate's delightful rendering of simple dramatic verse, who was (with bonus) only one mark (1 per cent.) behind the winner of the Challenge Cup ; a great achievement !

3rd * (93½ per cent.). *Miss Mary de Bunsen.* Winner of 3rd Prize.

Interpretation in both poems excellent. A star given for this. Delightful appreciation of poetry, showing a soul unusually gifted with inward vision, especially rare in one so young.

4th * *Mrs. Robert Carr Bosanquet.* Winner of 4th Prize.

Pronunciation requires a little more attention. Timbre of voice in first poem slightly rough. Interpretation excellent, also appreciation of poetry, and a high order of spiritual insight, not quite fully backed up by the details of artistic merit.

Voice and also rhythm much better in second poem.

Tied 5th *. (93 per cent.). *Miss Mary Wynne Jacob.* Tied for 5th Prize.

Voice production good, but rather too loud for the size of the room.

First poem : Rhythm excellent.

Second poem : Star awarded for interpretation, specially good.

Tied 5th * (93 per cent.). *The Hon. Lady Henniker-Heaton.* Tied for 5th Prize.

Star for interpretation which was excellent ; but you lost a little owing to signs of *mental* haste in your rendering of both poems. *More inward peace is needed.* You are recommended to meditate silently on the poet's thought, and let that sink into your soul.

Tied 6th* (88¾ per cent.). *Mr. Donald Winton Thorpe.* Highly commended.

This candidate seemed highly nervous and too conscious of his inability to forget his own presence and get into the poet's place. Otherwise his performance was very good, though lacking a little in true rhythmic feeling. (He lost most marks on rhythm.) He should do very well on a second attempt; and if he gave a little more time for study and practice, should win the cup.

Tied 6th* (88¾ per cent.). *Miss Peggy Hodge.* Highly commended

Pronunciation needs a little improvement.

This is the only candidate about whom the three judges have been in disagreement, but they all applaud her dramatic sense (not overdone) and her inward fervour ; also the quality of her voice.

Interpretation in second poem quite beautiful, for which a star is awarded.

7th (88½ per cent.) *Miss Hope Eversley Belfield.* Highly Commended.

In the first poem : pronunciation a little faulty ; poise : not quite at ease. Interpretation : not fully felt or given till nearly the end of the poem.

Second poem : A very good performance. Interpretation, poise, manner, and pronunciation all a great improvement on the first poem.

8th (88 per cent.) *Mrs. Humphrey Waterhouse.* Highly commended. Speaking generally: in both poems your work is of a high order of perception; but it showed lack of study and of finish. On *five* different headings you dropped a mark or two in consequence.

More quiet meditation needed in preparation, to make the poet's idea and feeling "sink in" to you; for, as you know, if it have not "sunk in" to the reciter, it *cannot* carry across to the audience! (Repeated readings of the meditative poems of Rabindranath Tagore would be good medicine for your malady!! [activity complex!].

9th (87½ per cent.) *Signore Federigo G. Ravelli.* Commended.

This candidate would have done much better in the first (beautiful) poem, if he had read it from a sheet of thick paper, and had stood up to read it. (But he had a difficulty about the lighting which was a handicap against him). He did not quite identify himself with the poet and lost marks on this account; as also by sitting down to read. The second poem showed his powers and his sympathies to better advantage; but he seemed a little ill at ease, so that the poet's idea could not flow quite freely.

He gives more of the sensuous and intellectual points of view than of the psychic.

We hope he will try again next year, under better conditions of light, etc., and win the challenge-cup.

10th (87 per cent.) *Mr. Percival Tudor Hart.* Commended.

First poem: Candidate seemed nervous, highly strung and rather ill at ease. Not fully audible from all parts of the room. Rhythm, good. Interpretation, very good. Some marks lost on poise and manner.

Second poem: Very good indeed. Fully audible. Rhythm: excellent. Interpretation: very good and a "musical" sense of poetry. Gained full marks in this for poise, manner and facial expression.

Had the first poem been equally good, he would have risen five places.

11th (86¼ per cent.) *Miss Barbara Vaughan.*

First poem: This candidate would have done better on a much simpler poem, less subtle and more suited to her present soul-capacity. Poise, manner, and facial expression; all very good.

Second poem: Rather too difficult a subject for her age. Her rendering was deficient in depth and inner feeling.

12th (85 per cent.)* *Miss Peggy Woof.*

First poem: Not loud enough. Also you are advised to *meditate* upon this poem.

Second poem: Requires more careful study. In both poems you are specially commended and starred for good pronunciation.

13th (81½ per cent.) * *Miss Jean Esther Rotherham.*

First poem: rather monotonous rendering. Try more to find "the pattern" of the poem, and build on that with your (beautiful) voice.

Second poem: Better than your reading. If you study your poem between *two* perfectly quiet meditations of a quarter of an hour each, you would gain a much better insight.

Full marks and a star awarded for quality of voice. Endeavour to win the cup next year.

14th (79 per cent.) *Miss Lucy Corry.*

There is a lack of fire and enthusiasm in your rendering of both these poems; also a defect in the poetic conception. Intellectual appreciation very good.

Second poem better than the first, but more study, more deep feeling, and more true sense of rhythm needed. You are recommended to study one or two short but *highly dramatic* lyrics; and one or two purely idealistic short poems of rare beauty and think about them a great deal, by way of preparation for your higher flight in this competition next year.

15th (76½ per cent.) *Miss Grace Turrill.*

There is a certain finish about this candidate's work, and yet all the time *something* lacking in soul quality. Voice production and management of breathing particularly good.

Second poem: Great dramatic sense shown in the handling of this beautiful little gem of a poem. Voice quality excellent.

Pronunciation in both poems needs improvement.

16th (74 per cent.) *Miss Karin Classen.*

Not well "built up." Requires more thoughtful study; more "grip" of the subject needed. Audibility imperfect. Rhythm decidedly good.

17th (67 per cent.) *Miss Mary Houghton-James.*

Pronunciation very good for candidate's age. Beautiful poems chosen, but subjects too difficult for present capacity.

Second poem *much* better rendered than the first. Candidate has a good dramatic sense. Great improvement expected after another year of study and some practice.

18th (66¾ per cent.) *Miss Margot Kelleher.*

Too monotonous, and where is your poem's "pattern"?

Second poem: The subject needs much more careful study with quiet meditation on the poet and his art and a diligent search for the principal points of beauty and for the *dramatic touches* to help you to "get it across" to the audience (as notable in Miss Jacob's second poem.)

19th (59 per cent.) *Miss Freda Barnes.*

Monotonous rendering. Learn to build up the subject of the poem into a beautiful "pattern." You have not gone deep enough. Too much mere "surface work." You cannot succeed unless you let poetry get hold of *you*, before you get hold of *it*!

20th (58¾ per cent.) *Miss Sally Hone.*

Audibility poor; and the *subject* requires much more thought and study. Do persevere! Interpretation very poor, and quality of

voice needs careful practice to improve it. Your best asset was pronunciation.

21st *Miss Florence M. Aiton.*

Louder next time please! You also don't "get it across." You have very little "grip" of your subject, and the first poem you chose is a difficult one.

In the second poem: Your rhythm and interpretation were both poor. The subject needs more careful study, and much greater appreciation of the poet and his art. But do not be discouraged by these criticisms, they are intended to serve as guide posts to help you to find a new and better way, so that you may come out triumphant later on.

Good recitation, like good gardening, is not achieved by saying: "'Oh, how beautiful!' and sitting in the shade." . . . It requires real expansion of the soul and of all the mental and psychic faculties, together with the heart's true and enthusiastic love of poetry. *Nothing less* will count.

These qualities were noticeable in Miss Mary de Bunsen's work and were present also in that of Miss Schimmelpenninck, Mrs. Bosanquet and in the second poem of Miss Peggy Hodge.

Sir Maurice Bunsen had the further advantage (as to marking) in his poise and ease of manner, born of long experience and especial opportunities for appearing before audiences.

Not Placed. *Miss Elizabeth Cunningham.*

This candidate seems very nervous and self-conscious. Has *good* voice quality, but should think more about the poet and the subject, and how to convey to her audience the *beauty* of the poet's ideas.

Interpretation: poor. Voice quality: good.

First poem quite good and gained 70 per cent. marks.

General Comments

Be it understood, first of all, that "your critic is your *best friend* in the race for success," so none of you will take offence at these criticisms, which are intended to help each and all.

The most noticeable fact of this competition is that the first twelve candidates were so very near together as to marks. This ought to make a most exciting competition for next year, if they will all try again, as we hope they will!

The second comment, arising out of that first one, is: how *easy* it will be for the competitors, with a little study and practice to overcome the defects mentioned!

Candidates should read more poetry with appreciation and true love for the poetic art; then think about it a great deal, find out the message to humanity in it all; then practise both reading and recitation, especially the latter! And try again next year and make a success of it!

The men's recitations have shown some special and rather remarkable soul qualities, which should be encouraged and cultivated.

The school girl competitors have shown us some very good material to work upon. But Miss England, please don't let Miss Continent-of-Europe bear away the palm *every* year! (much as we appreciate Miss Holland's outstandingly fine performance this year).

Lastly, let NO-ONE be discouraged! Let everyone realize that it is worth while to try again—and again!—for there is nothing in this world within the reach of all, in the matter of mental equipment that can enlarge our minds, lighten our cares and bring "rapture glorious golden" in the twinkling of an eye, than to have achieved through deep study the *inwardness* of really fine poetry.

Col. Minshall, when announcing the judges' awards and presenting the Challenge Cup to Sir Maurice de Bunsen, said, "It has been said that as civilization advances poetry is bound to decline. It is a pity that it should be so because in our modern civilization poetry is a splendid relief—in the rush and strife of modern life it forms an antidote to materialism. The question is how are we going to get more people to like poetry? The only way to make the love of poetry more widespread is to try to influence all those with whom one comes in contact, and in this connection the present interesting performance should greatly assist in making poetry more widely and intelligently read. The results are extraordinarily equal—a large number of candidates being very near the top, and would be encouraged to try again."

Mrs. Minshall presented trophies and mementoes to the "runners-up"—an unexpected recognition of the high standard attained. Chevalier Kyle, on behalf of the Council of the Poetry Society, and the President-General who had to leave early, expressed deep appreciation of Mrs. Minshall's generous and practical co-operation which was intended to strengthen and extend the Poetry Society. The arrangements for that particular event had been most complete and gratifying.

* * *

Following on The Poetry Society's dramatic reading in November, a more ambitious attempt was made on Wednesday, May 8th, when Stephen Phillips' last play, *Harold*, was presented at the Victoria Hall, Southampton Row.

Harold is a chronicle play, and as such, the rendering was well in tune with the inspiration of the author, in that it was rather a series of pictures than a dramatic unity. The plot, or rather the history, is the history of the Bayeaux tapestry. The tapestry is beautiful for the reason of the wonderful weaving of its colours, while the story is told in plain words plainly woven. So *Harold* is beautiful for the weaving of its words, while the blending of the colours and the extreme simplicity of the setting provided an unobtrusive though effective accompaniment.

Bad acting would inevitably have interfered with the beauty of the words, and we regard it as a great attainment that those who rendered *Harold* achieved so restrained a performance. All who saw the play will agree that the poetry was not obscured by over-acting, nor was the play marred by the elaborate production that has hitherto been the lot of the works of Stephen Phillips.

To enter into details. Miss S. Shavelson must be congratulated on her noble attempt to do the impossible. The character of Harold could never be truly rendered by a girl, but Miss Shavelson succeeded in giving a satisfying and emotional performance—perhaps too emotional. With her must be coupled Miss Joan White's sympathetic interpretation of Edith of the Swan Neck. There was no part in the play whose lines held so much beauty, yet its real poetry was hidden far beneath the surface. Miss White succeeded in revealing it all, and charmed all who heard her with the soft modulations of her voice. The best acting of the play, however, was in our opinion Miss Miriam Ritblat's rendering of Lanfranc. She threw herself into the part with great enthusiasm, and perhaps more than any other member of the cast, she brought to the fore the subtleties of the character she portrayed. Her acting with her sister, Miss J. Ritblat, in the first scene gave the play a solid foundation of acting and speaking from which it never wavered. Miss M. Graham-Pole's Elfrida showed her beautiful voice to great advantage, while Mrs. K. Morris-Jones' interpretation of Githa provided one of the finest scenes of the play. Of the remaining parts, special mention must be made of the versatility of Miss J. Gresham, who played several rôles with amazing skill. The whole performance redounds great credit of its director and producer, Mrs. Gwladys Wheeler.

Harold showed us that the play, always supposed to have been too weak for the stage, was full of dramatic quality and fine poetry, worthy of a fuller production; all credit is due to those medallists who gave up their time and energy to this most successful rendering.

R.L.

The New Newdigate

For the third year in succession the Newdigate Prize for English Verse, one of the most coveted awards at Oxford University, has been awarded to a woman, Miss Phyllis M. Hartnoll, scholar of St. Hugh's College. Miss Lilian E. Jones, of Lady Margaret Hall, is *proxime accessit*. The subject of the poem for this year was "The Sands of Egypt." Last year the prize was won by Miss Angela M. F. Cave, a member of Lady Margaret Hall. In 1927, when the prize was first awarded to a woman, the winner was Miss Gertrude E. Trevelyan. In 1928 the judges reported that they were unable to make any award.

The Newdigate Prize, which was endowed by Sir Roger Newdigate, the English antiquary, was first awarded in 1800, the year of Sir Roger's death. The Prize has an annual value of £21, and competition is

confined to undergraduates of not more than four years' standing. The length of the poem is limited to 300 lines, and dramatic form of composition is not allowed. Winners of the Newdigate Prize include Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Oscar Wilde, W. H. Mallock, Sir Rennell Rodd, the Rev. R. L. Gales, and Laurence Binyon.

Miss Hartnoll's poem on "The Sands of Egypt," is a pleasing composition. It begins with a picture of the desert :—

Silence and hot sun ; sand warm to the touch
Slipping and shifting underfoot, and rising
In sudden swirling eddies as the wind
Sweeps from the south ; then settling again,
Ceaselessly moving, piling and loosely lying.

If this is read aloud, as poetry should be, the hearer, by means of "s" sounds, will be given an impression of the whispering noise of sands in motion. Next we have a picture of the habitations of the living :—

Far in the distance rise the white walls of a village,
With waving palm and tamarisk and voices
Breaking the silence with sudden sharp staccato ;
And overhead cry the rose-red flamingos
Flying on swift flushed wings to the distant Nile.

Then we have the ancient artificers at work, hear a cry of the night, "Pharoah is slain," and watch the long funeral procession, bearing all the strange and beautiful things wrought to be with him on his viewless journey. We read his epitaph :—

The days of man on earth are swift and fleeting,
Therefore follow thy desire by night and day,
For the time of darkness cometh to bear thee away
Where there shall be no desire, neither love nor waking.

Soon the poem breaks into song :—

Here in funereal halls,
Painted on the stone walls,
Men long dead humanity confess.
Life for a moment caught,
Pauses in sudden thought,
And stands revealed in static loveliness.

Finally and finely the vanished slaves, "humble craftsmen who worked not for praise," are praised above the Pharoahs, and their art vindicated as a spiritual release from servitude, a road into immortality, a witness that beauty lives within the heart of man.

A Library List of Contemporary Poets

We have received from Captain Cranmer Byng, our erudite and practical councillor, and Editor of " The Wisdom of the East " series, who is chairman of the Books Selection Committee of the Essex County Council Education Committee, a request for an authoritative list of fifteen living English poets whose works or collected editions should be found in public and school libraries—a list that may be adopted by other library and educational authorities.

As this is a matter which must interest many of our readers and is too important and significant to decide off-hand, we venture to invite individual opinions and lists which we would collate. This would furnish a better guide than any arbitrary list compiled ex cathedra.

We hope our readers will respond to this practical inquiry, which we passed on to *The Observer* in which it was made the subject of a prize competition. The result was not known at the time of going to press, but it will supplement an analysis of other expressions of opinions in our next issue.

It is a sad reflection on our serious interest in poetry that the poets who come within this category are not already found as a matter of course in all public and college and school libraries. As they do not we cannot hope to find individual books of great merit in these representative collections. As will be seen in The Poetry Review, every month volumes of outstanding interest and importance in poetry appear, but how can we hope to find " John Brown's Body," " Prometheus in Piccadilly " and other similar volumes in libraries which do not contain the books of those who are considered to be representative contemporary poets. We would make a claim for the outstanding individual book in preference to the editions of those who have a more or less general reputation as poets were it not that we fear the librarians would declare there was no demand for them.

* * *

(*Continued from p.* 298.)

Authors were invited to make their selections from their own works and these passages are even more enlightening than the other quotations. We only wish more writers could have been included. It is so interesting to find, for instance, that W. H. Davies own choice is perhaps his best known couplet :

> " What is this life, if, full of care,
> We have not time to stand and stare."

The book is extremely well produced : there is a foreword by G. K. Chesterton, and a final prayer of thanksgiving for Shakespeare. It is a collection that will appeal to all sorts and conditions of men. The good things that it holds are amazingly reassuring in their reminder that not only are they lovelier every time we read them, but also that our great men love them too.

CATHEDRALS OF THE HEART

THERE are cathedrals builded not of stone,
Whose dark sonorous grandeur is no part
Of time or place, but with the bleeding heart
Bastioned, and buttressed with our blood and bone;
And neither Chartres nor Rheims nor Avignon
Can boast so radiant and rich an art
As this that without benefice or chart
Raises a roof to the celestial throne.

Here in the human heart the architect
Of our anonymous and common cares
Fashions from daily grief the golden stairs,
And, scrupulous tear by tear, his hands erect
A tabernacle whose eternal beams
Are heavy with the dust of our dead dreams.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER.

YORK MINSTER

Five Sisters

SWING back the heavy door,
Tread the time-weary floor,
Here, where dim arches soar
And shadows dart,
Here, from the outer day
Hidden and far away,
In this serener ray
Lift up your heart.

Lift heart and eyes to greet
Five sisters, with their feet
Deep in old time, and sweet
With quiet dreaming;
Fairer hath no man seen,
And on each noble queen
A robe of silver green

Fair as the dews that cling
And jewels gleaming.

To freshest leaves of spring
The dim light, shimmering
They shed for thee.
Soft as the arms of sleep
Or summer clouds that weep,
Calm as the greenest deep
Of a calm sea.

Sister by sister tall
A low song magical
Of memories lets fall—
Echoes that rise
Of prayer and praise and tears,
Poor human hopes and fears,
But peace of the long years
Is in their eyes.

Long time's vicissitude
No evil could intrude,
Fire toucht them not, nor rude
Hands of the fool.
The centuries that pass
Are as the growth of grass
Round the serener glass
Of a deep pool.

For sorrow hath no rod
Here, where the saints have trod,
Here, whence the peace of God
Shall never part;
Forget life's disarray
Forget all ills that weigh,
Be comforted and pray,
Lift up your heart.

JOHN SILVER.

IN A CATHEDRAL

WITH wearied heart and head bowed down with woe,
Hope but a vision long ago forgot,
By chance, I came to this enshrinèd spot,
The light of other days had lost its glow.
In darkness, I was wandering to and fro,
All that I thought I'd won, and yet had not
Seemed but an echo of I know not what
And all my treasures but an empty show.

By custom taught, upon my knees I fell
Down the dark aisle my misty vision strayed.
No sound articulate my tongue could tell,
And yet unconsciously I must have prayed.
And from the Chaos of my mental strife
A Form emerged. It was the God of Life.

JAMES M. TYNG.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

HERE time forgets the lost and trivial hour
That blows like dust, to silence in the streets.
Within these walls, the mighty rhythm beats
Of England's heart, as though it came to flower
Immutably, in transept arch and tower.
Here, pageantry of all her princes meets
The song that once was Shakespeare, and was Keats,
And lesser hearts touch glory, they breathe power.

There shall be vision while the Abbey stands
Beneath appointed stars, that one day whirled
A nameless Name in glory through the world,
Linked now with kings ; anointed heart and hands.
Safe in the timeless faith the Abbey keeps
Her prophets rest—her unknown soldier sleeps.

MARY BRENT WHITESIDE.

CATHEDRAL DOORS

(CANTERBURY)

A DOOR has gently opened, and as gently closed,
The door of silence ; motionless I stand
In the great church : pride and ambition are deposed,
And peace comes down and takes me by the hand.

Another door falls back before me as I move
Up the vast nave, with reverent step, the door
That opens into beauty, wherein souls may prove
The self-forgetting blessèd evermore.

This mighty fabric holds ideals of beauty wrought
By changing ages in the changeless stone.
From massive arch and pillar of the Norman, fraught
With strength superb, this gothic grace has grown.

Fair is the vista of these clustered shafts that bear
Their pointed arches high ; an air sublime,
Even as an inspiration, seems to linger there,
And lift the heart to things transcending time.

Again I pause—through the cathedral flows a tide
Of sacred words to music nobly bound :—
Now the last door before my spirit opens wide ;
I am where joy ineffable is found.

E. F. ALDEN.

DAWN

THE haggard wind
Clutching with lean and icy fingers
At the heart of a crumpled cloud.

Tearing the shrinking flesh
And breaking the beauty
Wrenching the livid sinews in his ire

Till blood red and distraught
The shivering cloud
Let's the gold heart come through.

SILVIA DOBSON.

SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE

I PARAPHRASE Linschoten,
As did Tennyson. (Compare and judge.)
Grenville was drinking once with Spaniards,
And in a bravery he drained his wine
And after crunched the glass betwixt his teeth
And munched it, till the corners of his mouth
Dribbled with blood: he took no harm.
He was greatly feared in Flores—he had burnt
The town of Santa Cruz—and even his own folk
Spake hardly of him, hating him
For fierceness and severity of nature.

Lord Thomas Howard was the Admiral
He served. When thirty Spanish ships of war
Were sighted, Howard gave command for flight.
Revenge's Master made to cut
The great sail, Grenville swore
To hang him for obeying. So they stayed
And fought and sank two vessels, killing
Four hundred of the enemy, yet *Revenge*
Was taken—fastest-sailing ship
Of Howard's fleet, with fair brass pieces in her.

Grenville was borne aboard the *San Paulo*.
The Spanish Admiral would not speak with him,
But all the other captains gathered round
To comfort him in his hard fortune.
Thereupon he made a speech in Spanish,
Claiming to be of a joyful and quiet mind
Because he had ended life with honour
As a true soldier ought to do, leaving behind
The everlasting fame of one who had done his duty
And thus gave up the ghost, nor could a man
Perceive a sign of heaviness in him.

Revenge herself was lost with other ships
Upon the cliffs near by Terceira Isle
By reason of a storm that raged eight days.
The island people said that Grenville sank

Down into hell and raised the devils up
To revenge his death, but others held
That God took part with heretics and plagued
The Spaniards for their Catholic beliefs.

ALLEN BROCKINGTON.

WOODLAND FLIES, AUGUST MOON.

DEEP in the fern-frond scented wood
Green consciousness is lulled to sleep
In warmth that wraps in numbing ease,

The drowsy mid-noon of the year
Scarce breathes upon the languid leaves,
The drama of the sky seems far.

The joys of May and June are gone,
The primrose, starry thought of God,
The heart-enticing nightingale.

No bird, no flower, yet there is
A hum of musing quietude,
Like Summer singing to herself.

Through every glade and patterned aisle
A thousand voices flute and sing
In ceaseless whispered symphony.

A thousand gossamer-winged flies,
Frail swarm of swift ephemera
In mazy dance and darting throng.

And sitting motionless I know
How Demi-Gods most pityful
May harken to our human hum.

And know that love and suffering,
In strange uncharted unity,
Make of all life one harmony.

A. E. MACKAY.

APPLES

IT was September
And the leaves were falling
Over the marigolds that burned the grass ;
You took the apples in your rush-green basket ;
I stood to let you pass.

A wreath of poppies and wild corn was twisted
About your hair,
And at your white throat hung
A necklace of the berries of the ash-tree
That tinkled as you swung
Over the hill that glimmered blue with shadows,
Into the trees that folded you from sight. . . .
Can I forget the darkness and the silence,
The fear and bitterness that swept the night ?

It was September
And the leaves were falling
Over the marigolds that burned the grass ;
You took the apples in your rush-green basket ;
I stood to let you pass.

BEATRICE EVE.

OF A GREY LADY, CLAD EVER SOMBRELY

SHE will not doff eternal autumn now ;
June may return, and nightingale and rose,
But constant she to that heartbroken vow
Of faded hues, marking her summer's close.

She moves a ghost amid our flesh and blood,
Her smile a thing familiar with the vault,
Beyond the crowd her heart still seeks its food,
Her silence separates but imputes no fault.

Never an April more that she will greet
Until she wakes amid eternal spring,
The asphodel about her shining feet,
While in the brakes of paradise they sing.

REDCLIFFE M'KIE.

XANTHIPPE COMPLAINS TO A NEIGHBOUR.

NO, he is not a handsome man, I grant,
My husband—lips too thick an ugly nose,
And eyes . . . well—they *do* bulge. But that just shows
I married him for love. When I descant
On life's afflictions, when I rave and rant
About my lot, believe me it's not those—
Socrates' features—that I mourn as woes,
But his weird habits. And he's adamant!

Always the same old tunic—and no shoes—
Barefoot! My husband! He a sculptor once!
How happy I would be were he a dunce
If he'd go dressed like other folk, and pay
His bills, and buy us food!
What, lad? You've news?
Speak plainer, imbecile! *Hemlock?—To-day?*

JULIA BOYNTON GREEN.

STANHENGIST UNSCEATHED

(*Stonehenge unscathed.*)

MIDNIGHT was deep upon the haunted Plain:
Above the mystic circles, vast and lone,
The quivering starlight fell as golden rain
On pillar, trilithon, and altar-stone.
Forth from their barrows rose the mighty dead
With Roman toga—Druid's snowy stole,
Oak garland, Viking helm with wings outspread—
I heard Pendragon's voice as thunders roll,

"Though tribes of restless mortals come and go,
Here do we keep our solemn tryst sublime;
Through ceaseless ebbing tides of love and woe
Our national altar burns till death of Time.
While from this shrine's inviolable sod,
Ascends our worship to the Unknown God."

BERTHA M. SKEAT, PH.D.

THE FRENCH PARNASSIANS

(*The Substance of a Lecture*)

IT is just a round century since the citadel of French poetry surrendered to repeated blasts from the heralds of the Romantic movement. The defenders represented that love of proportion, clarity, and logical progression which, so native to the French mind, had sapped the candid growth of lyrical expression by its almost Euclidean demands. Lyrically speaking, French poetry had remained stationary for two hundred years, and was still burdened by the yoke of outworn precept imposed by Monsieur Nicolas Boileau.

Some excesses are always incidental to the hour of victory, and it was against the excesses of the Romantics, both in technical practice and in moral and intellectual outlook, that the French Parnassians again reacted, their protests first becoming organic and effective about 1866. The great Hugo, though he had sinned against their light by parading his private anguish for the public gaze, they still regarded with supreme veneration, in spite of his lapses; but for the attitude of Lamartine who wept copiously in print and believed that Nature wept with him, or for that of de Musset who confided his woes of amorous misadventure to the world, they had only contempt. The former was the French exemplar of the Wordsworthian principle that "looks through Nature up to Nature's God," and believes that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." For *them*, however, Nature was merely inanimate and unresponsive matter, and for the wrongs of life they found no alleviation in "Pure religion breathing household laws." Heroic endurance alone made man god-like, and they exalted the stoic character of "man's unconquerable mind" for ever bearing onward in spite of uncomprehending Nature and an unseen Creator who gave him no sign. For them the one thing shameful was to cry out for sympathy, to uncover their nakedness, to sue for pity or applause as a solace to their wounds.

In this attitude they had, indeed, an ally within the Romantic fold; for the virtue of remaining impassive

under the blows of fate, of stoic forbearance or brave effort in despite of Nature's indifference, was found, after de Vigny's death, to be the great purpose extolled in his poems posthumously given to the world. The following rendering is taken from his *Maison du Berger* and shows clearly how he forestalled the Parnassians in probing the bosom of Nature and finding it heartless. It is Nature who is here speaking :

She said, " I am the empty stage grown passive,
From tremors of the mummer's tread immune ;
My emerald stairs, my courts of alabaster,
My marble columns by the Gods were hewn ;
I hear nor shout nor sigh ; nor calm or stormy,
Feel the slow human comedy pass o'er me,
That looks to heav'n in vain for bane or boon.

" Onward I roll, unseeing and unheeding,
By ant-heaps or the swarming hives of men ;
For me alike their dwellings and their ashes ;
The names of nations are beyond my ken
Who bare them, I am grave whom men call mother ;
In Winter's icy shroud your lives I smother,
Nor heed your worship when Spring comes agen.

" Before you I was lovely with sweet odour,
Far on the wind my streaming locks flung sheer ;
On skyey pathways immemorial faring ;
On the smooth axle of a God-like sphere
Spun onward. After you thro' void space wheeling,
Still shall I soar aloof from human feeling,
With brow and breast that cleave the all silent air."

Thus spake she with her proud voice full of sorrow,
And in my heart I hated her, and knew
Our blood was in her tides ; her fields and forests
Were fed with our own marrow as with dew.
I said unto my eyes towards her yearning,
" Gaze otherwhere, and weep not for her spurning ;
Give thy love only where thou canst not rue."

Who twice shall know thy tender grace and gesture,
Mild angel, and most mournful with thy sighs ?
Who like to thee shall bring such blissful solace
As thou from the wan radiance of thine eyes ?

So sweet to us the swaying of thy slant face is,
So sweet to us thy prone lithe body's graces,
And thy pure smile in love's or sorrow's guise,

Live on cold Nature, and for us re-kindle
Forehead and feet with thy predestined might;
Live and disdain, since thou art as a Goddess.
Meek man who over thee hath kingly right,
More than thy kingdom and thy thriftless glory
I hold the grandeur of our human story;
Nor will I cry to thee, in love's despite.

The Parnassians, like de Vigny, allowed no "pathetic fallacy" to breed within their minds, no darling wish to be father to their thought; they endeavoured "to see things as in themselves they really were," and they sought to express that reality with the utmost precision and exactness, in forms that were equally exacting. In this aim they were ably seconded by one of the Romantic camp, Théophile Gautier, who began as a painter, and had that keen eye for form and colour, which, together with exactness in scholarship and technique, was to become the hall-mark of the new school. He was hailed as their literary god-father, and to a tribute from the young de Banville he replied in lines which for long served them as a "Credo," these being his own definition of *Art*.

All finest art is seen
In forms that foil the blade
Unkeen—
Verse, marble, gem inlaid.

All idle bonds refuse!
Yet, so thou move aright,
Bind, Muse,
Thy limbs in buskins tight.

Spurn the too supple lilt
That like an easy boot
Is built
For any random foot.

Thou sculptor, cast aside
The clay thy hands alone
Have plied,
Thy spirit elsewhere flown.

Strive with the marble rough
  Hewn from Carraran steeps,—
Such stuff
  The perfect contour keeps.

Borrow from Syracuse
  To mould from out her bronze,
Male thews,
  Or breasts of Amazons.

With deftest hand go trace
  Till from the agate glance
Side-face
  Apollo's radiance.

Painter, all tints refuse
  That fade ; but make thou fast
Thy hues
  Beneath the furnace blast.

Let the blue syrens flaunt
  Their loopéd tails ; then limn
The gaunt
  Heraldic monsters grim.

Set Mary and her Son
  En-aureoled to brood
Upon
  The round World and the Rood.

Though all things end in dust,
  Yet Art well-wrought lives on ;
The bust
  Outlasts the city gone.

The buried coin or ring
  Dug up by some poor kind,
May bring
  An Emperor to mind,

And lines of perfect sound,
  Though God's themselves may pass,
Be found
  More durable than brass.

Hew down and chisel fine,
  So that thy dream be sealed
For sign
  In stuff that shall not yield !

There you have the apotheosis of Art for Art's sake, the exaltation of the difficulties of technical mastery to the rank of real virtue. The tyrannous exigencies of closely woven rhyme-schemes were to be regarded as both spur and bridle to Pegassus, and while this reaction against the laxity of their predecessors was justified, it seems to suggest a relative sterility in those who needed such a stimulus to production. "Look in thy heart and write" was a useless precept for men so minded; lacking any deep fund of emotion or fertility of imagination, they made a virtue of their necessity, and acclaimed as supreme the formal difficulties of expression, making "archæology the handmaid of their art." Gautier deals only with the world of appearance, his images are those of a painter, and he sees all life pictorially. Equally slight are the feelings which inform the verse of his pupil de Banville, but the artistic probity of which they were both exemplars cannot be overvalued. De Banville cultivated the outworn forms of the *rondeau* and *ballade* which had fallen into disuse since the days of François Villon, and he let archæology and a taste for classical myths replace the harder labours of the creative imagination. But his own personal feeling of a wistful and fleeting kind informs at least a handful of his pieces which are to be found in any representative anthology of French verse where he always bulks more largely than the slightness of his own personality seems to justify. Everyone is familiar with "We'll go no more the woodland way":

We'll go no more the woodland way, the laurel-leaves are clipt,
The little cupids in the pool, the naiads on the sill
Behold again the sunlit wave where beam and shadow dipt
On waters poured from cups they hold, how silent grown and still.
The laurel-leaves are clipt, and the weary stag at bay
Now trembles at the sounding horn; we'll go no more astray
Where troops of lovely children once went frolicking their full
Beneath the glance of lilies dewy-eyed and dewy-lipt.
Behold the scythe that shears the grass, the shattered leaves that spill
We'll go no more the woodland way, the laurel-leaves are clipt.

That penultimate line, "Behold the scythe that shears the

grass, the shattered leaves that spill," provide us with a symbol for the things that held Baudelaire's gaze in a fatal fascination—the beauty of decay, the refined languors of luxurious disease, the gluttony of the senses slowly undermining the spiritual fabric while feigning to sustain it. Inasmuch as he drew his themes from the disorders of his own life, he did not properly belong to the Parnassian group; but he bowed to Gautier as his master, and worshipped Form with an agonized devotion not less than his. Baudelaire's life was all horror and confusion; his art is all order and serenity, the convulsions of the human visage frozen upon a mask. Here is the message ("Beauty") which he learnt from the lips of the Muse:

I am lovely as a dream of stone, Men sicken,
Against my breast deep-bruiséd. I bring sore
Travail of Love to poets, evermore
Dumb as the Dust that no desire may quicken.
Sphinx-like I am throned aloof; as plumes that thicken
The breast of swans my heart is white and frore;
All rhythm-offending tumult I abhor
Who am never with mirth elate nor sorrow-stricken.

Poets before my noble poise and gesture
That hath the pomp of all the world for vesture,
Waste their sad days in study of dry reams;
For I, to keep these loving suitors loyal
Hold mirrors up, that make all beauty royal
In wide eyes brimming with immortal beams.

Fantastic pride coupled with a weak will were Baudelaire's undoing in the world of men; he sought a sanctuary in the illusions of the senses, and his only lasting solace in the practice of an art that made no concessions as a bait for the world's applause. In this he was at one with the great and dominating personality of Leconte de Lisle, the most austere and noble figure in the whole range of French poetry. To him the poetical effusions of de Musset were just the shameless whimperings of a child, the howlings of an unlicked cub who had never faced reality or come to

terms with it, who had, indeed, never reached manhood of a kind that could command his respect. For he held that a true poet should regard life with an Olympian detachment, or speak with the intonation of a worshipper at the shrine of absolute Beauty, being ashamed of the trivial vicissitudes of the usurping and temporary self. The Romantic school, according to him, " rises in self-disturbance and wastes away." His artistic creed had for aim to maintain unspoiled the probity of the individual soul amid the onrush of delusive sensation. Never from him need have come the ashamed confession of Shakespeare that he had

> Gor'd his own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear.

Hence his indignant protest against the æsthetic of de Musset in his celebrated sonnet, " Les Montreurs." He says :—

> I will not be a beast to whine and beat
> Against the bars. But those who will may thus
> Draw the mob's eyes to watch the murderous
> Wounds of the heart that are to them as meat,
> I will not bare my body of the sheet
> Of shame that wraps it for the perilous
> Praise of the lewd to set their infamous
> Dull eyes aflame again with sterile heat.
>
> Though to a nameless tomb Time bear me down,
> My silence in eternal silence shut,
> I will not sell to thee my shames and sores,
> Nor barter heart-throbs for a cheap renown,
> Nor dance within thy vulgar booth, nor strut
> O world ! beside thy mummers and thy whores.

For one who despises Life, praises Silence, and acclaims the Stoic, this, you may say, is a strangely passionate outburst. Your bewilderment had an illustrious sharer in the younger Dumas, whose affront to Leconte de Lisle on his reception to the Academy has become historical, for he then hinted that if the poet loved Silence no one had asked him to break it, and if he hated Life the means to end it were within

easy reach. But Leconte de Lisle was himself an agonist in the human drama which he affected to ignore.

Born amid the Indian Ocean, on the remote island of Réunion, his mind became saturated with his early impressions of tropical splendour and of the relentless and inhuman natural powers which so nakedly unfold under the ardour of a tropical sun. Illusion he knows is there, but not less does he find it in the life of the more temperate West, where the apparent tameness of civilized man is but a cloak for tastes not less callous, if less candid, than those of the jungle beast or the illiterate black. Rejecting religion and embracing science, Leconte de Lisle sees man faring down an everlasting road where the rest of animate creation are his equal fellows, all alike obedient to a mandate never understood, and only released from their sufferings in the Nirvana of death. "Quelque chose comme un volcan couvert de glace"—something like a volcano covered with ice—was the phrase used by Catulle Mendès to describe the master; and, in spite of his cold exterior and the marble perfection of his form, we do feel with Leconte de Lisle that this is only the covering for a seething tide of intense feeling such as the other Parnassians give no hint of, the strictness of the metrical bonds being in other cases a necessary support to their laxer emotions, and not, as here, the outer dam against an ever imminent flood. To the lapidary skill of Gautier he adds the philosophic detachment of de Vigny, while he brings with him a splendour and exactness of natural description unattempted by any of his forerunners. Epic narrative is what he most affects, and it has been well said that "His poetry is almost a procession of the august, persuasive, or hideous shapes with which in diverse climes and ages men have clothed the indomitable desire to worship; and his special pathos feeds upon the transience of ideals,"[1] But such poetry leans heavily upon learning and tends to compositions of some length. I must therefore illustrate from less elaborate themes. Here is his picture of the "Black Panther":

[1] F. V. Eccles, *A Century of French Poets.*

By tangled paths beneath the wood's green awning,
Where the thick grasses in the sunlight smoke,
Where torrents roar down deep-hewn gullies yawning
Under the reeds they soak;

Behold the panther comes with black limbs shining
Back from her midnight hunting to her whelps
Where amid bones they huddle close, repining
With hunger-goaded yelps.

Restless, with wary eyes like arrows probing,
She steers among the boughs her furtive way,
And on the blackness of her velvet robing
Gleam blood-stains of her prey.

She drags its mangled remnant, torn asunder
From a slain stag, whereon to-night she'll feed,
And the frayed haunches of her dreadful plunder
Drip blood on moss and weed.

And here is his picture of nightfall in the ravine of a volcanic isle closing with a characteristic assertion of Nature's indifference, and the need for heroism in man.

On the rock slope flame-filled as a live cinder
The supple lizard, basking in his sloth,
Sinners as though this emerald length were tinder
That thrilled to the sun's kisses nothing loth.

O'er mossy hollows where the quails are resting
In leafy shelter from the jungle heat,
With eyes half-closed the amorous cats go questing,
Smooth-gliding by on velvet paws discreet.

Black on a boulder, a red loin-cloth wearing,
A native herdsman careless of his kine,
Hums a Saklavan melody, and, staring,
Dreams of the isle beyond the blue sea-line.

Thus on the yawning brink all things that tingle
With life thro' frond or fibre, plume or pelt,
Now shine, and dream, and chant in purpose single;
Yet, in a twinkling, into stillness melt.

Thro' the deep pit now silence walks with darkness,
Since, with a roaring sound the mountain steep
Hurled from the waves its sulphurous mass, in starkness
To harden in impenetrable sleep.

A patch of sky above the branches curving
Shows in a sparkle on the air up-buoyed,
A flock to Ceylon or Rodrigué swerving
Like flakes of snow astray on the blue void.

Save for this peep-hole on the water flashing;
In the still night the ravine sinks to sleep;
And even a splintered boulder downward crashing,
Sends up no echo of its dreadful leap.

He who hath probed thy ways, O Nature, proveth
Illusion binds thee, and thy face belies;
Whether in wrath or gladness thy strength moveth,
Or rage or rapture thy cold heart denies.

Happy the man whose heart is his own shelter,
Self-sealed, from grief or mirth or any hate,
Unstirred by rumours of the world's vain welter,
A gulf of silence still inviolate.

"Too fierce for wisdom, and not rapturous enough for poetry" is Arthur Symons' verdict on this poet. An element of righteous anger runs like a flame through his verses; the growl of a deceived Othello who would crush out the abominable and unpitying bait which is all he finds upon the lips of beauty; a voluptuous tropical nature views life through too clear a lens and shrinks from the horror shown beneath it.

For a narrative poem which is typical of the Parnassian outlook, being a glorification of the Stoic, I will turn to Catulle Mendès whose description of his master you have just heard. Mendès was a remarkable virtuoso who could handle any metre in any style and on any theme, a facility which led to his own undoing, by tempting him to give his publishers whatever they thought to be profitable; but he was sincere as a pioneer in the Parnassian movement, to which his recruitment was assured, in characteristic French fashion, by his marriage with Gautier's daughter Judith. As Mendès was, I believe, of Jewish race, it is fitting that this story should be of the submission of a Jewish woman who obeys without questioning the commands of her Lord and Master, although warned by a dream that she will die in so doing. The title is "Consentment."

Now Ahod on the plain kept countless sheep.
His spouse one summer day fell deep asleep
Under a tree nigh Bethel. While she lay
A vision passed before her, in this way:
Herseemed she from a dream was newly woke,
And Ahod was before her and thus spoke:
"Woman, arise and gird thee. Of my herd
Last year I sold an hundred sheep. One third
Is still unpaid of the full sum agreed.
But I am old and spent; and in my need
Whom may I trust? Get thee to Segor, bride,
And claim the thirty shekels still denied."

She murmured not of desert, thieves, or dread.
"Thy servant hears thy bidding, Lord," she said.
And when with lifted hand he pointed north,
She took her woollen raiment and went forth.

Now stony were the ways and ill to tread,
With tears that blinded and with feet that bled,
She fared till darkness fell, and on through night
Without or human sound or human sight,
Till on a sudden from the shadow smote
A savage scimitar across her throat,
And savage hands snatched off her robe of wool,
And left her dying in a bloody pool.

Thereon, in mortal terror, she awoke
And found her Lord beside her, who thus spoke:
"Woman arise and gird thee. Of my herd
Last year I sold an hundred sheep. One third
Is still unpaid of the full sum agreed.
But I am old and spent; and in my need
Whom may I trust? Get thee to Segor, bride,
And claim the thirty shekels still denied."

She answered, "Thou hast spoken, Lord. I haste."
She called her brood about her. Then she placed
Her hands upon her first-born, and she bent
To kiss her Benjamin. And all intent
She took her woollen robe, and forth she went.

You may regard that woman as noble if you are an idealist, or as a noodle if you are a cynic. The Parnassians were not concerned with delivering a message; as Flecker well said in reference to them, "It is not the poet's business to save man's soul, but to make it worth saving."

Some of my hearers may remember a contemptuous

dismissal of Leconte de Lisle in "The Confessions of a Young Man." Mr. George Moore's disfavour—which had no more obvious ground than a professed dislike of his name and his appearance—would seem more plausibly due to the poet's lack of that personal depravity which the disciple of Pater regarded as a proof of grace. The aversion must certainly have been mutual, for Leconte de Lisle would hear plenty of self-professed depravity from the lips of one whose pretension "of being ashamed only of being ashamed" he would regard as an affront to the dignity of art. But the curious point is that all the beauty of the pagan outlook, all the glory of the antique world, which Mr. Moore then found so appealing, would have been displayed for him in the poet's own volumes as nowhere else, had he taken pains to look for it. The truth is that Leconte de Lisle was not only a purist in the practice of his Art, but also a Puritan in the habit of his life—a distinction for which he was not to be forgiven. Aloofness is not an engaging quality; it may beget veneration (at which Mr. Moore has never been adept), but it does not encourage affection. In this respect Leconte de Lisle bears a strong family likeness to Milton, and the character of the man is seen in the mould of his poetry, despite all his efforts to be impersonal.

The dawdling stags beside the mossy thickets
  Draw in the unhastened dew;
  Under green canopies the light drips through,
The lazy sylvans slumber.

And the wan Naiad of the sacred fountain
  Lets fall her lids awhile,
  Dreaming, half-drowséd; and a happy smile
Flits round her moth's red flower.

No yearning eye, love-lit, hath seen that body
  Beneath its limpid veil
  All snowy white, with long locks liquid-frail,
Asleep on the sand's silver.

And none hath seen that cheek of maiden softness,
  The ivory neck, the line
  Of that young bosom or the shoulder fine,
White arms and lips unsullied.

But the lewd faun, alert on the near branches,
  Spies through the leafy net
  Her supple body with spilt kisses wet,
Beneath the water shining.

Whereon he laughs with strident joy inhuman
  That thrills the arbour cool;
  And the maid startled, pallid o'er her pool,
Wanes out like a blown shadow.

Ev'n as the Naiad in the distant woodland
  Asleep beneath the tide,
  Fly from the impious hand and eye, and hide
Light of the soul, O Beauty!

I find in those lines an accent already familiar in the English Puritan who sang of "Sabrina fair . . . under the glassy, cool, translucent wave," the same defender of regicide whose own most royal arrogance could call upon the Muse to

drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodopé, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture.

Both poets dwelt within an ivory tower, breathing an air too rarified for human intercourse, hardly condescending to be "men of weakness like unto ourselves." Such men do not flatter our sympathies, and we are apt to be indifferent to those who are thus indifferent to ourselves. Perhaps this was the root of George Moore's disfavour, though as a professed despiser of the *plebs* and as one who identified the humaner feelings as the stigma of inferior talent, he would be the first to deny it. But the same young man confessed that "the fiery glory of José Maria de Heredia . . . filled me with enthusiasm—ruins and sand, shadow and silhouette of palms and pillars, negroes, crimson, swords, silence, and arabesques." This is curious, for Heredia was Leconte de Lisle's perfect pupil, and the one perfect example of the Parnassian ideal. A native of Cuba, of mingled Spanish and French parentage, the strong sunlight

of his early days gave him, in common with his master, a clear, unflinching outlook that shrank from no detail in the painting of a colourful picture. As Hugo in *La Légende des Siècles* had given us a series of historical pictures from the dawn of Time down to the era of the great Napoleon, so Leconte de Lisle, seeking more exotic themes, and without Hugo's preoccupation with what the younger poet would have termed "sham and sensuous religiosity," gave us a series of heroic frescoes drawn in hard, stupendous outline by an artist who sat

> as God holding no form of creed
> But contemplating all,

and recording phenomena with sensuous delight and sentimental indifference. It is Heredia's glory to have filled in these outlines with the richest of colouring and the most elaborate ornamentation, for of Leconte de Lisle's cardinal part he is but the development and culmination, gathering in intensity and concentration what he loses in range and scope. He paints an epoch in a sonnet, presents the symbol of a civilization in his fourteen lines on the Petrarchan model, for he worked almost exclusively in this form. Paradoxically he is only a lesser poet than his master because a more perfect Parnassian, controlling his feelings more perfectly only because he had less to control. Of his perfect economy of means, of the richness he brought to his themes from his exact scholarship, of his magnificent if somewhat metallic sonority, nothing can be conveyed in English save in a poor dilution. I will sttempt to give you three of his pictures, one antique, one mediaeval, and one modern.

THE FLUTE

Eve falls. A flight of pigeons on the sky.
  Love's fever knows no smoother antidote,
  O goatherd, than soft piping to the note
Of cool, reed-filtered water running by.
Within this plane-tree's shadow where we lie
  The grass is soft. Friend, let thy rambling goat
  Climb the steep fell above and browse, nor note
The whimper of her weanling. Here have I

My flute, seven hemlock cuttings waxen-bound
That sob or sing, cry shrilly or fall mute,
Prompt to my whim. Silenus' art is kind;
Thee will we teach for healing of thy wound,
Thy sighs shall filter thro' the sacred flute
And all take flight in the harmonious wind.

The Dagger

The pommel reads; "Calixtus Pope." The mitre,
The keys, the boat, and netting for the draft
Are graven on the shield; and, cut with craft,
The crested bull, the token of the fighter,
Ramps on the sheath. The fingers of the smiter
Folded on ivy-garlands thick engraffed
With beads of coral where a satyr laughed;
And the bright blade with every blow shone brighter.

Messer Antonio, when he forged this grim
Pastoral wand for the first Borgia's whim,
His fatal dynasty foresaw. Gold hilt
To steely tip is loud with all the weird
Innumerable whispers of the guilt
Of foul Rodrigo and the whelp he reared.

The Coral Reef

Deeper than plummets sound the sunbeams smite
Under the sea, and coral-forests fuse
Thro' their dim basins that the warm wave strews
With petall'd beast and pulsing bud. Sea-mite,
Moss, fern, or flower, by iodine made bright
Or the rank brine, glow now with dawn's own hues
And dapple with dark purples that suffuse
The barr'd root of pale madrepore. The might

Of yonder monster thwart the frondage flings
His scaly splendour. Lazily adrift,
He prowls in lucent dusk. And now he swings
His fin round like a sudden torch, and rings
The sullen crsytal's stilly blue with swift
Golden and pearl and emerald shudderings.

"To load every rift with ore" was not an advice the Parnassians were in need of, Heredia least of all; it may even be argued that he *over*loaded his lines, dazzling the eye with too rapid a succession of objects, and feasting the

senses while he starved the emotions. If this be so, it is a failing that is most evident when the aims which he followed are most triumphantly achieved.

With Heredia, the perfect Parnassian, we may fitly close, for of the other followers there were none so suited for success. Sully Prudhomme, though faithful as to form, was too strenuously concerned with the purpose of life and the appeasing of his conscience, to be really " de la maison " ; Mallarmé, equally faithful to the marmorean ideal, yet surrendered his mind and muddled his syntax to obey the suggestions of beautiful sound; Verlaine began as a Parnassian but promptly relapsed into the most personal of singers, lisping in sobs like a repentant child. Of those still living, Henry de Regnier once paid the Parnassians the sincerest form of flattery, and added to Heredia the further compliment of marrying his daughter. But he has latterly become the most original experimenter in the irregular ode, and has dallied with a symbolism as much to his taste as the Parnassian word-painting.

Essentially the practice of the Parnassians was a protest against the Romantic habit of " tearing a passion to tatters," a plea for the virtues of restraint, an attempt to enrich poetry with a sense of epic as opposed to personal excitement; and in all these ways it was a movement towards the classical. It may be thought that their virtues are badly needed to-day by those who have never learnt to " consume their own smoke," or by those who regard the propriety of formal discipline as a stale joke. For them we may paraphrase a quatrain of Catulle Mendès :—

> There is no poem without flaw
> But flowers from a root of law,
>
> The dauntless eagle's lofty swerve
> Must follow its ordainéd curve.

WILFRID THORLEY.

The versions quoted in this article are taken from the author's *Fleurs-de-lys* (Heinemann) and *A Bouquet from France* (Harrap) by kind permission of the respective publishers. These books are published in America by the Houghton Mifflin Company.

THE MUSIC AND POETRY OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS

THE student of the music and poetry of the American Indian is constantly tempted to make general statements that will apply to all the tribes of the red-man from Maine to Mexico. One might as well try to generalize in dealing with the music of the Europeans. The people of Germany and the people of Turkey are not more different in their culture and art than say the tribes of the plains and the tribes of the western coast. The music of the Indians in the extreme northwest has little in common with that of the pueblo tribes of New Mexico and Arizona. One does not have to select tribes which are far distant from each other to get strangely different customs and arts. Thus the Hopi Indians of Arizona are agricultural, living in villages; expert makers of pottery, highly gifted in music and painting, following strange religious customs such as the snake-dance; frugal, industrious, and peaceable. Surrounding them, mingling with them, preying on them for no one knows how many generations, is the nomadic tribe of the Navajos. These build no towns, make no pottery, raise little or no corn, are devoted to the raising of sheep and to the expert working of silver. Their highest form of art appears in their curious and wonderful "sand-paintings," which form a part of their elaborate ritual. One would expect these cultural differences to appear in their music and poetry, and so they do. The songs of the Navajo are often sung in a high, screaming falsetto instead of in the robust, resonant voice of the Hopi. Navajo legends are, however, full of rich imagination and fine philosophy. The same poverty characterizes the music and the same richness characterizes the legendary of the nomadic tribes of the plains. One is again tempted to generalize. Do nomad peoples usually excel in poetry and legend while settled peoples carry the art of music to higher levels?

Music is a very serious matter to the Indian. A song is powerful medicine and not to be taken lightly. The Hopi take infinite pains in preparing for their festivals. The

chants must be sung without any slip or break. Any slight mistake destroys their magic effect. The rain will not come, or the sick person will not get well, if the songs are not perfectly rendered. For weeks before an important festival the singers are drilled until they are letter perfect in the complicated melodies. I have had astonishing evidence of the accuracy with which they learn their songs. Four young Hopi singers sang a " Buffalo Song " into my phonograph, and in spite of the long and involved character of the song it was given in perfect unison. Four days later I collected the same song again and found it exactly the same from beginning to end *and it was given in the same pitch.* These singers were ordinary working men with no special training in singing.

The Navajo, on the other hand, has given us poetry which does not lose all its beauty even after translation—a serious test for any poet. Some of his songs have been rendered into English verse by Professor Hartly B. Alexander and also by Eda Lou Waltom, but the close translation of Washington Matthews gives one a clearer notion of the vividness of the Navajo imagination :

VOICES THAT BEAUTIFY THE LAND

The voice that beautifies the land,
The voice above, the voice of the thunder
Among the dark clouds, again and again it sounds,
The voice that beautifies the land.

The voice that beautifies the land ;
The voice below, the voice of the grasshopper
Among the flowers and grasses, again and again it sounds
The voice that beautifies the land.

Here we have the use of the repetition and the refrain. One gets from this, however, but little knowledge of their keen appreciation of the subtleties of rhythm. One must have the Navajo words themselves to get the delicate sense of the matching of words and the balancing of rhythms. Thus in the song of the " Bluebird."

Tsi'-hay-il-kae', do'-la a-ni'
A'-yas dot-li'-zi, bi'-za ho-lo'

Bi'za ho-zo'-ni-go, bi'-za ho-lo',
Bi'-za ho-zo'-ni-go, Hwi'-he in-li',
Do'-la a-ni', Do'-la a-ni'.

Matthews gives the following literal translation which conveys, however, nothing of the rhythmic design which as any poet knows is as important as any other feature of the poem :

Just at daylight Sialia calls :
The bluebird has a voice ;
He has a voice, a voice melodious ;
His voice melodious that floats in gladness.
Sialia calls. Sialia calls.

If one tried for a translation that should keep more closely to the rhythmic structure of the original one might give it thus :

" Dawn of the day ! " hark to the call,
Voice of the bluebird, " Dawn of the day " ;
Calling melodious, calling away,
Calling melodious ; Hark to the call :
" Dawn of the day ! Dawn of the day ! "

We see in this little song an attempt at rhyme which is a device sometimes used by the Miwok tribe of California. Matthews observes also that the regular name for the bluebird is " Doli," but for " poetic reasons " it is given in the song as " Dola." We may have here an instance in primitive poetry of the selection of words appropriate for use in poetry. One may wonder if the art of poetry among the Navajos is not ripe for revolt and whether their " new voices " will refuse to heed the absurd prejudices of the older singers. Why should one sing always of the " old oaken bucket " and never of the " new centrifugal pump " ?

In connection with this same " Bluebird Song " I myself had a curious experience. For some reason my friend " Black Mountain " seemed very reluctant to sing it for me, and when at last he did he sang it in a voice so low that the record was practically worthless. I did not find out just what was the matter until later when I asked another singer to sing it for me. He flatly refused. I asked him what was the trouble with the song. " That is a winter song," he

replied. It was then late spring and the gods would not be pleased to hear it. Trouble might come of it.

There is much of the real essence of poetry in the solemn vow of old Torlino to tell the exact truth concerning the Navajo beliefs as to the beginning of things. He says :

" I am ashamed before the earth ;
I am ashamed before the heavens ;
I am ashamed before the dawn ;
I am ashamed before the evening twilight ;
I am ashamed before the blue sky ;
I am ashamed before the darkness ;
I am ashamed before the sun ;
I am ashamed before that standing within me which speaks with me ;
Some of these things are always looking at me ;
I am never out of sight.
Therefore I must tell the truth.
That is why I tell the truth.
I hold my word tight to my breast."

Among the gentle people along the western coast the poetic instinct expresses itself in many astonishingly elaborate legends of a mysterious " First People " from whom all the races of men and animals have descended. These myths have been handed down from immemorial antiquity ; from ages long before the white man came. It is therefore surprising to find close parallels to our own tales of the Creation of the Universe, the Flood, the Re-peopling of the World, the Theft of Fire, and even such nursery tales as that of the Wolf who tried to get into the house to eat the little pig. The stories are told by professional *raconteurs* in all-night sessions in the great round-house of the village. They are chanted with religious fervour in sonorous Miwok. " The mountain people had no fire. The valley people were assembled in their round house with fire in the middle of it. Old Man Lizard in the mountain saw the smoke.

Smoking below !
Smoking below !
My grandmother starts a fire to cook acorns !
It is very lonely ! "

Too-le-loo, the white-footed mouse, the player of the flute is sent to steal the fire and charms the valley people to sleep in the assembly house by his music. He steals the fire, hides it in his flute and hurries home. He is overtaken by the two swiftest runners of the valley people, Rain and Hail, but he succeeds in deceiving them and finally brings the fire to the mountain people. Then comes a strange version of the story of the confusion of tongues. They build a fire in the round house. The people in the middle received the fire and warmth; the others but little. Those that were near the fire talked distinctly. They all had the same language. The others could not hear one another. Then the old *utenthe* who tells the tale closes the story with a sage reflection which the people of this war-torn world would do well to ponder: "The people fought each other because they did not understand each other's speech."

These quiet, friendly folk, who have suffered much at the hands of the white man who does not understand their speech, have a musical instinct as remote from the amorphous idiom of the eastern tribes as the melody of Italy is from the racket of a Chinese theatre. Their songs are characterized by a lyric beauty and a sense of phrase and answering phrase that sets them apart from the songs of all other red men. They have, of course, the peculiar "gamey flavour" characteristic of all Indian music, which the white man tries in vain to acquire. The Miwok is not particular as to the number of beats he puts into a phrase, though he is always consistent about it. He is not worried if his intervals are not quite such as will fit the keyboard of a piano. The chief reason why they smile indulgently when I try to reproduce one of their songs is not that I give the intervals and the rhythm incorrectly. It is because I cannot give the Miwok attack. The native singer does not hit the note quite in the eye to start with, but comes on it from above or from below in an indescribable and inimitable way.

The Indians of California are not much interested in the matter of words for their songs. They content themselves for the most part with sonorous vocables. What few

words do enter into their singing have been handed down from such remote antiquity that their meaning has been lost. In the recital of their legends the tale is interrupted to give the song of Coyote, or of Mourning Dove, or of the White-footed Mouse. Each of the characters has his own *leit-motiv*, and the telling of the myth, which is after all a sort of religious exercise, would be very imperfect without the appropriate musical setting. Even their gambling, which is also a sort of religious exercise with them, must go to the accompaniment of wild melody.

No white musician who has ever heard these strange songs of the red man can help believing that we have in them a rich field of musical material. The Indian has little or no sense of harmony. He has a most amazing sense or melody, and after all, while one can write harmony more of less by rule, there is no source whence one can get melody save from the blue sky. Once in a thousand years we produce a Mozart with an instinct for melody, but the rest of the time we get along as best we can with composers who can do nothing beyond the invention of harmonic combinations. It is for this reason, it has seemed to me, that any attempt to dress the melodies of the Indian up in the modern harmonic idiom is bound to fail as an appropriate setting. It is easy, of course, to err on the side of stark adherence to the actual primitive form. Also it is possible to dress the melodies up in very pretty form with flounces and frills that reduce the dignified red man to a lacka-daisical figure. The problem is to fit the songs to an unobtrusive accompaniment which suggests the atmosphere of the original without a too slavish adherence to the phonograph record. I have found the most effective setting, where an orchestra is not available, to be a piano with flute obbligato and in this form I have published two books of songs, the first taken entirely from the songs of the Miwok and called *Seven Songs from the Yosemite Valley*, and dedicated to my dear friend Ina Coolbrith, "maker and lover of beauty." The second book contains five songs from the Pomo, Yurok, Chippewa, Hopi, and one Miwok.

The chief contribution which the American Indian will

make to the art of music is in the direction of melody as opposed to harmony. With his remarkable mastery of the field of rhythm he stands in curious contrast with the American negro who has a delicate feeling for harmonic combinations, but whose rhythmic structure never includes such a simple notion as triple time. I have never heard a negro spiritual in anything but double time. I have many records of Indian songs in strict double time, triple time, six-eight time, nine-eight time, twelve-eight time and even five and seven beats to the phrase. In one of my songs, " Come Back to Ahwahnee," I have used a Miwok song in seven-eight time to fit the words " O my beloved, come to me ! " The effect is a curious, poignant wistfulness.

And what of the Indian's contribution to poetry ? The value of a myth consists in its availability for great artists to work in. The Greek stories are in themselves no more interesting and poetic than many of the Indian legends, but they were the material out of which the great artists of Greece have wrought undying forms of beauty. There is a vitality of the same sort in these strange tales which is attracting many workers. Alexander's *Manito Masks* and his book of poems *God's Drum* are evidence that there is inspiration to be found in our native material. There are also many old-fashioned readers of poetry who still find " Hiawatha " one of the great poems written in the new world.

But the most important contribution which the American Indian will make to the life of the white man is his sensitiveness to beauty in general. No matter what tribe, no matter what occupation, I have always found him profoundly interested in the æsthetic. He may make a precarious living at the most sordid kind of work, his surroundings would seem to indicate that he had no interest in any form of beauty, but on close acquaintance he will be found to be absorbed in some bit of carving, some artistic form of weaving or basket-making, or he is making a flute or a magnificent head dress. The tin can of commerce interests him not so much for its contents as for the value of the bright metal in ornamenting his belt. The silver dollar is

valued by the Navajo not so much for what it will buy at the traders as for the bracelet which he can make out of it. This love and devotion to what they think is beautiful is a trait so wide-spread among this people that I have learned to rely on it. As soon as they know that I am collecting phonograph records not for the money I can make out of them, but because I really love the strange wild melodies, and wish to adapt them so that white men may understand and enjoy them also, then they are ready to sing them to me, generously and heartily, with all the understanding that one lover of beauty has for another. Do we not need this absolute belief in beauty now, when art critics are crying "There is no such thing as beauty! You are following an *ignis fatuus*! Beauty does not exist! It is all a delusion!" It is a reassuring thing to sit with the wise old man before his bit of carved bone, or his tassled flute, and hear him intone:

"With beauty before me I walk;
With beauty behind me I walk;
With beauty below me I walk;
With beauty above me I walk;
With beauty all round me I walk;
It is finished in beauty;
It is finished in beauty;
It is finished in beauty!"

DERRICK NORMAN LEHMER.

PRAISE

WE measure day by day
The loveliness and pain;
Yet do not stay
(Being but men)
To mingle praise with lark and willow-wren
For teeming earth and air,
And for the lovely music of the rain.

DULCIE EDEN OSBORNE.

THE GOAL OF POETS AND POETRY

IN this day of conflicting opinions upon the subject of the ultimate goal or object of poets and poetry, one will meet with adverse criticism in practically any channel wherein he launches himself; in writing this article, then, I am fully aware that there may be only a small percentage of my readers who will agree with its author. I shall, therefore, not write with the aim in mind of making converts to my theory, but rather to strengthen the position of those who share my belief in this instance and will in a fraternal spirit come to my assistance, if indeed, assistance be needed.

In speaking of a material thing we cannot, justifiably, ignore its creator . . . in this article, therefore, we can but combine poetry and the poet. Indeed, it must be evident that we gain our clearest understanding of poetry by first making ourselves familiar with the mental functionings of the poet.

First then, a poet is a creature of subjectivity . . . his mind is his workshop; here are born his ideas, his thoughts; here he finds the words which give him the power of expressing these things. In brief, he lives within his poetry . . . as his poetry is, so is he.

Secondly, your true poet is a composite of many things: psychologist, philosopher, a spiritualist, and a convictionist (that is, an unswerving belief in his own convictions as applied to the fundamentals of life). Too, we must confess him to be a master of syntheticism; for who more than he syntheticizes the many unitary functions of the mind into a composite and harmonious whole? Last and greatest, the true poet is a seeker of truth . . . that form of truth which owns personal experience and earnest introspection as its parents; the resultant product is consequently the clearest possible expression of truth as it has made itself evident to the poet through the mediums of his personal life and his individual faculty of reason.

We should not allow the foregoing statements to give us a wrong interpretation of the poet. For example, I have said that the poet is a psychologist; by such a state-

ment I did not mean to associate him with those who make a thorough and formal study of psychology, for the poet is, strictly speaking, an informal psychologist, he cares not about the details of this science, but interests himself with the more apparent reactions to certain situations. Thus he does not stop scientifically to dissect emotions, he is content to present them in apparel which is easily recognizable by the most humble reader. Yet, he is properly a psychologist because of the very fact that he creates in poetry those situations or stimuli which give logical birth to psychological reactions. I have also said that the poet is a spiritualist, . . . he is in the sense that he deals occasionally with the spiritual elements of life . . . but he is not a spiritualist in the sense of a medium.

Perhaps, too, it will be well to qualify the term convictionist as an attribute of the poet. The poet forms convictions only after he has convinced himself of their values. He may have an unlimited number of opinions upon various things encountered in his life; but we find that his real convictions are very few. It is seldom, if ever, that his opinions will make themselves heard in his poetry . . . but eventually his convictions become the very life of his work, they seep into his speech, into his correspondence, and at last they virtually control the tenor of his poetry. This is not as harmful or distasteful a fault as it might seem at first observation, for the poet's convictions are largely the same convictions held by the majority of those persons whose lives are contemporary with his own. Hence, we had the Classicists writing in the strict, formal style that one expected of such an age where the strongest convictions favoured the humanistic and impersonal doctrines . . . and again with the Romanticists, who wrote in rambling styles and whose convictions dealt greatly with the emotions of humanity through the medium of the poet's personality. It will be seen, then, that while the poet is rightly a convictionist, yet, the attribute is not a selfish one for his convictions are largely those which are universally uppermost at the time in which he lives.

We now arrive at the point where we may properly ask:

What is the goal of the poet? There can be but one answer to such an inquiry . . . the poet must use advantageously all of the foregoing attributes or powers; he must strive to work these into a harmonious whole, so that when we read his poetry we are at once aware of his subtle craftsmanship. Not only should we be aware of his craftsmanship, but the beauty of it ought to make a lasting impression upon our minds. Even here we cannot stop, for a poem may have all these requirements and still not be a poem of the highest order; the truly great poem needs in addition to these things mentioned an unquestionable atmosphere of truth. Here, it will be seen, I have combined the goals of the poet and poetry.

By way of conclusion I shall briefly define a true poem and present its goal. A true poem is that one whose several parts interlink, each with the other, explaining and harmonizing each part and with it all strengthening the purpose and accepted tendencies of metrical arrangement. The term parts as used above refers rather to stanzas and strophes than to single lines . . . for it is an unquestioned fact that a poem which attains any great length does not and should not claim each separate line to be truly poetical. Lastly, the goal of poetry is to present truth in such supremely beautiful expression that it will create the highest possible pleasure and enjoyment for its readers.

D. MAITLAND BUSHBY.

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The outstanding feature of the Elizabethan Stage Circle's "demonstration performance" at the Royalty Theatre of George Chapman's *Charles, Duke of Byron*, was the exceptional clarity of the speaking of the sonorous lines, combined with the speed with which scene succeeded scene on the "tableau platform," giving the effect of cinematograph celerity added to perfect enunciation which no "talkie" can emulate. We congratulate Mr. Poel on a notable achievement: Chapman's *Byron* should be allowed to electrify the town for a season.

MISS EDITH SITWELL AND HER ART

I

OF our living woman poets, Edith Sitwell is perhaps the most brilliant; certainly she is the most provocative. She flaunts Edith Sitwell like a red flag before the irate gaze of reviewers and members of the public who cannot or will not appreciate her poetry at what she defiantly asserts to be its true worth. In *Who's Who* she naïvely states that in early youth she "took an intense dislike to simplicity, morris dancing, a sense of humour, and every kind of sport *except reviewer-baiting*, and has continued these distastes ever since." The average reviewer, being only human, does not enjoy being baited; he not unnaturally tries to get his own back on Miss Sitwell. If he is more than usually provoked, he not only pours contumely or sarcasm on her work but he draws attention publicly to her peculiar mode of dressing, as though her appearance and her poetry were one and the same thing. Miss Sitwell, however, does not object to these irrelevant personalities; on the contrary, she and her equally provocative brothers appear to thrive on notoriety; the more they are criticized and ridiculed, the more they flourish. They are adepts in the valuable modern art of self-advertisement.

Miss Sitwell, indeed, openly glories in her present unpopularity. Was not Shelley (she cries vehemently), shamefully persecuted during his lifetime? Did not Keats—now securely enthroned among the Immortals—have his work held up to scorn and ridicule by ignorant and loutish contemporaries? To be misunderstood while one is alive would appear to be an almost infallible sign of true genius; but unfortunately there have been neglected versifiers as well as unrecognized geniuses who have taken comfort from this thought.

According to Miss Sitwell—and here she is undeniably right—the true artist, be he poet, sculptor, or painter, always sees life from an intensely *individual* point of view—a point of view which is entirely hidden from the confused

imitative gaze of the ordinary man in the street. It is the artist's mission to re-educate his public, to win them round to his way of thought and cause them to see what he sees in the way he sees it. If he is unusually fortunate, he will accomplish this, with much trouble and difficulty, during his short span of life; otherwise recognition will be delayed until after his death, as it was in the case of Keats and Shelley and Coleridge (with whom it pleases Miss Sitwell to compare herself). In one of her provocative newspaper articles, she writes:

> "I state clearly, definitely, and with certainty that I am writing poetry which, though it may appear as a *crime* to those of my contemporaries who, while they never read poetry, are so well fitted to judge it, will appear as anything but a crime to the readers of a hundred years hence."

This is sufficiently ambiguous to be impossible of contradiction; who knows what people will be reading—or not reading—a hundred years hence? They may be reading Edith Sitwell; on the other hand, they may not.

Leaving the future alone, is it not largely Miss Sitwell's own fault that her poetry is not more appreciated *to-day*? In her natural anxiety to make herself heard in an age of noise and speed, she alienates her audience by a too-strident blowing of her own trumpet, a too-defiant flaunting of her vivid and belligerent personality. She should keep quiet and allow what genius she possesses to reveal itself through her published verse, instead of diverting attention from her work by loudly drawing attention to herself on every possible and impossible occasion. The general public is more interested in Edith Sitwell as an eccentric personality than as a brilliant poet—which is not at all as it should be. She has rashly flown to the other extreme from poets like Mary Webb and Thomas Hardy, who lived in an almost morbid retirement and strove shyly to conceal their personalities rather than to accentuate them. Self-confidence is an excellent virtue within reason; but Miss Sitwell has too much of it. She would gain more readers of the discerning sort if she were less enamoured of publicity.

II

And what of her poetry? On the whole it is difficult to criticise, perhaps because it is far too original and (at its worst) too self-consciously complex to fit neatly into any ready-made pigeon-holes. Miss Sitwell says wistfully of herself and her brothers in *Colonel Fantock*, "We all have the remote air of a legend."

There is something of that remoteness—either real or assumed—in her verse, which continually eludes the reader in tortuous mazes of unfamiliar and bewildering imagery, sometimes achieving a sudden clear beauty and sometimes resulting in a tiresome medley of mere words, irritatingly straining after effect. Miss Sitwell depends too much upon sound and too little upon sense; she has favourite words such as "coral" and "bucolic" which she works to death, and she is inclined to harp too much upon the same theme. In some of her best-known poems she appears to be obsessed by snow, which she describes variously as "coral-cold," "clear-petalled as lemon blossom," "goose-soft," and "like stephanotis and white roses." In other poems her metaphors and similies are startling and often quite incomprehensible. What is to one to make of this, from *Aubade*?

> "The light would show (if it could harden)
> Eternities of kitchen garden,
> Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck,
> And wooden flowers that 'gin to cluck."

In the same poem there is an even more amazing couplet:

> "Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
> Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind."

All this outlandish imagery may be perfectly clear and reasonable to Miss Sitwell herself; but does such perverse obscurity of expression necessarily imply the existence of genius?

Fortunately for Miss Sitwell and for ourselves, she can write and has written far, far better poems than *Aubade*. Quotation is as hard as criticism, but there is haunting music in *The Little Ghost who died for Love*:

" Fear not, O maidens, shivering
As bunches of the dew-drenched leaves
In the calm moonlight . . . it is the cold sends quivering
My voice, a little nightingale that grieves."

Mademoiselle Richarde is less remotely fanciful, but more genuinely tragic; it is an unforgettable picture of a rich old autocrat's poor companion, vitalized and made human by the poet's burning indignation and pity.

" She swims across the river-dark vast floors
To fires that seem like rococo gilt carving
Nor ever knows her shrunken heart is starving
Till, crumbling into dust, grown blind and dumb
With age, at last she hears her sole friend come,
Consoling Darkness smooths her eyelids fast
And she has her own resting-place at last."

Much of Miss Sitwell's verse is haunted by ghosts—pale pathetic wraiths of unhappy lovers, lonely old maids—

" Poor unloved creatures whose existences
Were spent upon the surface of another's
Life—"

and poverty-stricken old bachelors like Colonel Fantock, the hero of her finest poem, who babbles harmlessly to children of imaginary military glories and is made suddenly and cruelly aware of death's creeping shadow by an overheard remark about his age, spoken in " a gay voice like a honeysuckle nook." The poem ends on a high note of simple tragedy:

" On that June day
Cold Death had taken his first citadel."

There is yet another ghost which continually haunts Miss Sitwell—the ghost of her own happy childhood and the childhood of her two brothers, who are referred to in *Troy Park* under the fanciful names of Dagobert and Peregrine.

" But Dagobert and Peregrine and I
Were children then; we walked like shy gazelles
Among the music of the thin flower-bells.
And life still held some promise—never ask
Of what—but life seemed less a stranger then
Than ever after in this cold existence.

I always was a little outside life—
And so the things we touch could comfort me;
I love the shy dreams we could hear and see—
For I was like one dead, like a small ghost,
A little cold air wandering and lost."

Since those days Miss Sitwell has grown up, and her maturity is a maturity of sharp sophistication, torturing complexity, bitter disillusionment. . . . She confesses sadly in *The Country Fair* that

" This is a different world; the snow lies cold
Upon our heart, though midsummer is here."

What hope is there, she cries wearily, for a world of lost childhoods, of paid companions, of social snobs, and tragic lovers? Yet she goes on writing, because the poetic impulse is in her blood and she cannot do otherwise. With all its imperfections, her art is born, not made; even at its worst her verse is less tiresome and artificial than her elaborately aggressive attitude towards the public and her reviewers. If only she could forget poor Keats and the *Edinburgh Review*!

MARY MAIR.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

WHAT if your candour irk, your satire sting?
The mysteries ancient sceptics dared to touch
In learning's lonely cause, you boldly clutch
Entire, with hands unbound, and to us bring,
Jest-jostled, naked knowledge. And no thing
In all our worldly schemes but gains a much
Illumined sanity, a purpose such
As gods might praise, when from your lips you fling
Wit-wedded wisdom, clothed in rare disguise
Of Puckish cunning. Great spirit, aloof,
Austere, yet gentle, of a god-like air:
Erect above our crouching souls you rise,
And fearless, ask " Are not you folly-proof?"
Chuckling, you make fools wiser than they were.

FREDERICK KEMP.

THE DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY

XXVII: POETRY: DEFINING THE INDEFINABLE

[To give a little piece of personal history, it was the object of the writer to have the happiness and distinction of taking Mr. and Mrs. Markham to London this year for their first visit. This has not been possible, but none the less we have Edwin Markham with us in the following appreciation of Poetry, which is the outcome of an evening spent about the poetry table when the "beloved bard" agreed to let us have something from him for publication in THE POETRY REVIEW. Only yesterday, turning the pages of "40,000 quotations," poetry drew one. From a poet of such outstanding honours as Edwin Markham, we are pleased indeed to have his treatise on the subject nearest to his heart.

To use Mr. Markham's own words, "the crude husk of things," he has eliminated in his meaningful essay. What we particularly like is Mr. Markham's statement that "Poetry is man's protest against the unreality of the actual, and his proclamation of the reality of the ideal." —A.H.B.]

BACK in the poetic glamour of the Middle Ages we beheld three romantic figures moving everywhere under the eye of the world: the pilgrim, the hermit, and the poet, the wandering minstrel. Science has driven the hermit from his cave in the desert; for the deserts are now irrigated by artesian wells and are turned into town lots, and the humble hermit is made to pay rent and taxes and descend to the prosaic level of the mere citizen. And the pilgrim is no longer a picturesque figure on the highways with staff in hand and wallet on back. He has been forced to discard these poetic insignia. He has leapt into the snorting automobile and now goes by waving his hand on his way to the golf links in the rolling hills.

But the poet is still with us. You can see him any day, not necessarily loitering by the brookside, but perhaps dodging the automobiles on the city avenues, or the country highways. You may not hear him twanging his lute under his lady's window, but you may hear him, perhaps, pounding his typewriter in his attic, or listen to him on the air speaking to his far-flung radio audience.

The poet has survived because he serves a deep and vital need. Nothing survives in the heart of the world, in the generous affections of the race, except what is useful and noble. The poet survives because he has made good—

yes, because he has delivered the goods! He survives because he is needed to feel the heart-hungers of the race, to help answer our wild questionings. For poetry comes to us not only to increase our delight in life, to widen our joy in the meanings of the world; but she comes also as a great awakening force, a great spiritual force, a force that builds character, that broadens our sympathies and helps to inspire and support the soul in its struggle with the doubts and despairs of our existence.

So we have poets, noble poets, in all lands—poets who are helping us to lift the curtain of nature that we may look more deeply into her beauty and wonder—poets who in both lyric and drama are making more vivid for us the throbbing life of the people with their joys and struggles, with their luminous hopes and their tragic sorrows. We have poets who love the quiet and sequestered paths and whose songs are all sweetness and light; and we have others who are the poets of protest and of revolution, who are crying out against the oppressors and lifting their voices in defence of the betrayed rights of the people.

What, then, is poetry? What is this pervasive and evasive energy that has made so great a stir down all the ages of the world? Generation after generation has attacked this enigma with valour and with ardour. But no answerer has come to stand unchallenged, for as soon as one has made answer he is hurled to earth by some disputant, only to spring up refreshed for a new encounter, and to join in fiercer grapple with his opponent.

What is poetry? We may wrestle and subdue the problem here; yet I dare say that in the coming days there will be some truth-seekers still unsatisfied, some restless spirits who will arm themselves for a new wrestle with this sinewy Goliath. Let the wrestling go on, let all muscles be trained for a new struggle: the more struggle, the more life. Indeed, we may measure the spiritual vitality of a nation by the readiness of a people to plunge into spiritual struggles of this high order.

In the little red school house we were taught that one way of defining a thing is to tell what it is not. Let us

shell off a number of negatives, shell off from poetry what is extraneous and accidental so as to find what is at the heart of it, find what is essential to its very life.

I do not begin with a vision of poetry in her aerial flights. I begin in the solid ground of definition. I am forced, O friends, to pluck the feathers out of the wings of my imagination and stick them into the tail of my judgment.

Why is poetry so hard to define? Because it rises out of emotion, and to us men of earth emotion is for ever formless and evanescent. Things that are ponderable and touchable can be captured in some net of definition. But things that rise out of the mystic springs of emotion are constantly changing form, taking new aspects, like the leaping spray of a fountain. The moment we picture the spray, it has already changed to a new form of its iridescent loveliness. For the same reason we may never hope for a definition of poetry that will express all the forms of its multitudinous beauty.

To begin with, poetry is not mere description, philosophy, history, or direct moral teaching. Nor is it mere eloquence, although eloquence rises almost to the high level of the Muse. Poetry is none of these in her deep essence, and yet she may use any or all of these in building up the fabric of her beauty and wonder.

It is common to suppose that philosophy, especially when expressed in melodious words, is a high order of poetry. But this is a gross error. Philosophy is always a thing to be reasoned about, to be proved; while poetry is a thing beheld as a vision of truth with its beauty. Philosophy is pedestrian, a dweller on the earth; while poetry is winged, a dweller on the high aerial roads. Philosophy reasons; and science, the out-door brother of philosophy, explores the material world. Poetry gives these two gods of the ground only a passing glance, for she has the starry eyes that can see into the heart of the mystery.

Nearly everyone can give his sense impression of things. But when we approach the spiritual aspect, definition is difficult, for we there approach the deeper and more intricate world of our existence. The spiritual is a real world;

yet its subtler mysteries tend to elude us, to escape out of the net of our definition.

Let us keep in mind that we are spiritual beings as well as material beings, keep also in mind that all material things and events have deep spiritual realities behind them, a deep significance often unrecognized by common intelligence. The poet lifts the curtain from the material thus revealing the deep, eternal meanings.

After reaching this high level we need scarcely say that mere verse-form is not a part of the living principle of poetry. Verse is the frequent form in which we find poetry, but poetry may exist in prose. Still all great poetry is rhythmical, and sweeps on in beautiful marches of music. And for this music there are no laws that can be put into words. Shakespeare's beautiful lines were doubtless written without any reference to rule, and Milton's mighty verses with no thought of the laws of harmony. The rhythmic beauty of their lines sprang spontaneously out of their souls as jewelled spray out of a living fountain.

Again what is Poetry? Thousands, as I have said, have tried to answer this enigma. No one has entirely succeeded, because poetry is too elusive, too ethereal, to be caught into a web of words. Yet it seems to be the whimsical intention of the Lyric Muse to give out the problem, age by age, and keep the dazed world guessing.

Each soul comes alone into earth, comes isolated from all others. We are born alone; we die alone. We come from mystery; we go to mystery. We are travellers on an unknown road. Each one of us needs the help and inspiration that reach us from the insight and sympathy of our comrades: we need their spirit-touch and their friendly hallo to "take away the dread of things."

What have been some of these guesses regarding Poetry, some of these imperfect definitions? Back in the unknown ages—hundreds of years before Christ—there lived in the shadowy Orient a great poet-prophet, the immortal Zoroaster, the wise thinker who gave to the Parsees the Zend Avesta, one of the bibles of the world. He defines a poet to be a man who "inscribes things unapparent in

apparent fabrication." This is the germ-idea in the greatest of all definitions, the definition that dropped long after from the pen of Shakespeare.

Zoroaster touched the marrow of the matter; for it is the poet's function to make the unapparent, the unseen, the neglected, become the apparent, become the visible, become the understandable. The poet reveals for us the hidden meanings of the world.

Let us turn now to Aristotle, who was called by Plato the intellect of the Platonic school—to Aristotle whose marvellous mind, without the props and probes of modern knowledge, was able, two thousand years ago, to map out the fields of art and science. Poetry loomed large to the eye of Aristotle even in that era three hundred years before Christ. Again and again he discussed the lofty theme with his disciples as he strolled up and down the leafy walks of the Academe. He gave forth a large environing definition, declaring in substance that 'Poetry is the expression of the universal principle in life, that Poetry detaches the transitory, the extrinsic, until we recognize the immutable and everlasting.'

It is said that the illustrious Emerson once had the kindness to lend a volume of Plato to an old farmer near the village of Concord. The Yankee farmer read the book and returned it with the commendatory remark: "I enjoyed this book fust rate. This here Mr. Plato has got hold of a good many of my idees." So, in the same spirit, I may applaud the definition of Aristotle, I find that he has seized some of my ideas of poetry.

Aristotle, like Zoroaster, long centuries before him, beholds the poet flinging off the superficial and the accidental and revealing to us the central truth and beauty at the heart of life. Two thousand years after these words were spoken under the trees of the Academe, the poet Wordsworth caught a glimpse of this poetic penetration into the heart of the world; and he tells us how, with

> "An eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

And now let us turn to Shakespeare, to the immortal Shakespeare standing at the intellectual summit of the world. He describes the poet's mystery in one unsurpassable rush of words :

> " The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
> And, as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Here is the deep-seeing soul of the great poet looking into the vasty deep of the Poetic Mystery. If poetry was ever truly defined, it was defined in those luminous words. Note a few of their meanings. First, the poet's eye is rolling in a fine frenzy because the poet is excited by a noble emotion, he is thrilled with some living sympathy. Next the poet glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven ; because he sees a deep echo or correspondence between the spiritual and the material, between things heavenly and things earthly, between things that are seen and things that are unseen. He sees that the earth is a shadow of heaven, that nature is only the time-vesture of the Eternal. Seeing these mighty relations, he is able, under the light of his imagination, to body forth the forms of the unknown spiritual realities. He makes the unseen visible. Indeed, he sees those realities so vividly that he has the power to give them shapes, to embody them in concrete images, and by this means to give to things that seem to us airy nothings a local habitation and a name. In other words, the Poet is an explorer : he explores the unknown Africa. Yes, the poet's eye, lighted by imagination, looks into what is vague and misty to common men and turns that dim realm into a world of vivid beauty and wonder for the delight of all. Thus Fairyland was lifted out of its fog into delicate beauty when Keats penned his immortal " Ode to a Nightingale," dwelling on the loveliness of the bird's voice, a voice

> " that oftimes hath
> Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in fairylands forlorn."

Here we see the poet turning the vague and dim into beautiful shapes, giving to the " airy nothing " of Fairyland a local habitation and a name.

All that is said by later poets on this line may be considered little more than a commentary on this masterly utterance of Shakespeare.

Milton puts his commentary into the brief statement that " Poetry is simple, sensuous, and passionate." Poetry must be simple—that is, it must be free of the complexities of the accidental and the transitory. It must be sensuous, that is, it must cease to be abstract, must take concrete and vivid form—must give to " airy nothings " a local habitation and a name. It must also be charged with noble feeling, and so must take form only when the poet's eye is in a fine frenzy rolling. Thus we see the thought of Shakespeare and the thought of Milton melting together into one spirit.

Now Francis Bacon, a man with flashes of deep insight, bears this arresting testimony: " The poet may discard history for [the poet's] feigned history, thus depicting a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things." Here again we find that it is the poet's high mission to transcend mere imitation, to sweep on beyond cold matter-of-fact, in order to reveal for us " a more ample greatness . . . than can be found in the nature of things." Is not this Baconian statement on all-fours with the Shakespearian statement that it is in the poet's high business to body forth " the forms of things unknown " ?

And Shelley, in his *Defence of Poetry*, writes these memorable words: " Poetry may be defined to be the expression of the imagination . . . Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar " Here again we find a reverberation of the Shakespearean idea that " imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown."

Shelley puts the stress upon the word imagination, but Wordsworth centres the weight upon the great word emotion. " Poetry," says he, " is the spontaneous over-

flow of powerful feelings ; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." He expresses in the following noble lines the high serenity he ascribes to the poet's mood :

> " I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and the mind of man,
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

The most famous of all the modern definitions drops into these words from the pen of Matthew Arnold : " Poetry is . . . a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." This definition has been attacked as being too cold and prosaic. It is not a true definition if we stop with the words " a criticism of life " ; but the definition may be defended when taken in its wholeness. That grim word criticism does not signify depreciation and fault-finding : it is intended by Arnold to signify the appreciation of life, the weighing of the matter and meaning of our existence. Indeed, on another page he speaks of criticism as " the noble and profound application of ideas to life." I venture to say that Arnold should have used the word interpretation instead of the word criticism : interpretation would doubtless have expressed more clearly the intent of his mind. Poetry is the interpretation of life. For a poem does flash upon us the poet's feeling toward life, his faith in the moral order, his vision of the long procession of existence ; and thus the poem interprets or criticizes life, revealing the beautiful truth under the show of things.

Turning to Emerson, the greatest American on the high summits of thought, we find this seasoned definition : " Poetry is the perpetual endeavour to express the spirit of the thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which causes it to exist." This sounds like another echo leaping down the centuries from the immortal Zoroas-

ter in the misty Orient. He saw that the poet "inscribes things unapparent in apparent fabrication"; and our Emerson sees that the poet is in "the perpetual endeavour to express the spirit of the thing, to pass the brute body" and search for the reality in the unapparent, in the ideal meanings of existence. It is a deep delight to see in this harmony of two great souls the beautiful concord that exists among the noblest spirits of all lands, however widely separated by the centuries. It furnishes testimony to the root-oneness of humanity.

Expectation upstarts with glowing face at the name of Edgar Allan Poe. What light did he throw upon the enigma? He declares that "Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty, whose purpose is to elevate the soul." Here the word rhythmical sweeps into our ken—a potent word in any definition of poetry, for all impassioned words move with rhythmic steps. Rhythm runs through the universe. The house of life is woven of vibrations: crystals, roses, oceans, and the heart of man, all move in one rhythmic dance. There is rhythm in the tides of the grasses, in the pulsation of the arteries, in the marches of the stars.

And now we turn to Richard Le Gallienne, a poet who, like Poe, is sensitive to every poetic emotion, a poet who has done his valiant part in building up the lyric beauty of the world. He also attempts to define the indefinable. "Poetry," he says, "is that impassioned arrangement of words (whether in verse or in prose) which embodies the exaltation, the beauty, the rhythm, and the pathetic truth of life." Here is an oak in an acorn. Let us note in passing that poetry is not confined to verse: she is an ethereal spirit that can wear also the homely raiment of prose. Let us also focus our attention upon the suggestive phrase, "the exaltation of life." The poet pushes aside the temporary and the accidental, the crude husk of things, and reveals to us the hidden meaning of the world, the meaning that is for ever uplifted and beautiful.

You will note also that Mr. Le Gallienne tells us that poetry "embodies the pathetic truth of life." But in the

face of this high dictum, Hammerton, the artist, steps forth to tell us that "poetry is the art of lying beautifully." This cavalier utterance gives expression to the gross error found in the unthinking minds of the multitude. Poetry is not lying: when poetry begins to lie (as she does sometimes) her starry raiment withers and vanishes: she ceases to travel the high aerial roads. Much that goes under the name of poetry is merely falsity, inanity, melodious doggerel.

Indeed, Sir Walter Ralegh expresses it nobly when he declares that the poet is of all men the least a liar. For genuine poetry is true because it is the revelation of immortal beauty. Poetry will seem to be a lie only to dim-seeing, half-awakened souls. To all others poetry will be a glimpse of the ideal and immortal meaning of their existence, a fervent flash out of the eternal aspect of things.

And now at the end I venture to set forth my own definition of this old imperial art: "Poetry is the impassioned expression—under the light of the imagination—of the unfamiliar beauty of the world, the beauty that is the smile upon the face of truth." In other words, poetry is the revelation of the strange in the familiar, of the eternal in the transitory. It is man's protest against the unreality of the actual, and his proclamation of the reality of the ideal. It is the passionate cry of the heart in the presence of the wonder of life. EDWIN MARKHAM.

II

Mr. Charles Alva Lane, of Alliance, Ohio, is a good friend of Poetry. Himself a poet and scientist, he is interested in drawing into the stream all likely writers, and was the giver of the premium for poems "Packed With Thought," which brought such gratifying results. He comes to us again to suggest that we have another "go" at the same subject, and the announcement of that prize is on the premium page of this magazine. A constant traveller in fair and far lands, he brings to bear upon his writings a personal contact with the distant outposts of thought and habitation all over the world. Whether it be Confucianism, Buddhism, Mohammedism, Christianity, Fascism —he is equipped to give one an interesting and serious consideration of these great gatherings in the name of religion, of humanity through the past and present.

He is the translator of the poems of Herder entitled *The Self and Personality*; also author of a book of poetry called *Cosmotheos*, and many another interesting treatise. Among his poems we choose *Fichte* and *Truth* given here.

TRUTH

" Men may say: My Reason;
But ever has he dared to say: My Truth."
VICTOR COUSIN

Soul of Omniscience! Unbegotten One!
Minerva-like to Being didst thou rise,
All grey with myriad eternities
Or ever Reason knew thy course begun!
More fair thy tranquil face to look upon,
Haunting infinitude for all men's eyes,
Than all forms fashioned midst the pageantries
Of mutibility 'neath any sun.
The grinding cycles wearing down the worlds
Mar not thy symmetries; behind the Night
Eternal Radiance unto thought unfurls
Thy verities in phases infinite,
Till Reason, midst the revelations awed,
Avoucheth thee the Oracle of God.

FICHTE

A dream was thine that, like an alkahest,
Dissolved the Universe to Ego-Soul
Whose Luminous seclusion zoned the Whole
Within its myriad dimensions. Pressed
Thy spirit outward, Dreamer, in its quest
For Godhood-limits till the wavering goal
Ebbed back with intimate and kindred roll
That made the eternal Oneness manifest?
Yea, and to thee infinitude at last
Quickened with cosmic visions that were God,
And thou His mirror in the haunted Vast!
Such sight was thine that Thought and Star and Sod
Alike were Self, alike were God;—the trace
Of utter Life endowing Time and Space.

From his poem *Memory* of six striking stanzas, I quote the first:

" Into the spaceless infinite
Where burns a living whiter light
Than ever sun was lit withal,
The phantom messages of Thought,
Some far where in the silence wrought,
Through rifts in mystic ethers fall,

and ending with this :

> Into these spectral vasts of soul
> The ebbing tides of Being roll ;
> But thou, benignant Memory,
> Begotten of the Eternal Now,
> So lovest thou the world that thou
> Wouldst give Time immortality.

Mr. Lane chose his subject—and again chooses the same subject—for the following reason, quoting from his letter :

> He " desires to determine whether philosophy has any standing in the court of art, that is, to learn the attitude of art toward the purely intellectual as distinguished from the emotional and sensuous. May not artistry lend its glamour to the higher syntheses of thought ? Indeed does not such ideation function only in the " fine frenzy " of creative imagination ? Truth and Beauty may not be sundered. The Poet and Philosopher are akin, sweeping with intuitional vision through all zones of thought."

* * *

Aromancy and Other Verse, by Faith Van Valkenburgh Vilas (Dorrance & Company) ; by the same author : *The Drummer of Fyvie and Other Verse*, *Wonder Thoughts of Childhood*, *Tears of Dawn*, *Fiat Lux*, *The Maker of Souls*, *White Tulips*, *The Star Wife*, *Out of the West*, *The Trees of the Blazed Trail*, *A Masque of Old Loves*, *The Three Thanksgivings*, *A Christmas Mystery*, *His Mother's Son*, *The Home Valley*, *Gold-locks*.

Mrs. VILAS with a ready talent shows herself at once to be a natural singer. Her poems read anonymously at any of our poetic gatherings immediately win friends—illustrated by *Homing* :

> Where you live and where I live
> Are places far apart.
> So little houses by the road
> Lie closer to my heart.
>
> I pass them on the countryside,
> A glimpse of white and green,
> And you are homing up a path
> Your eyes have never seen.
>
> I hurry through a waiting door
> That never saw me go,
> And we are locked in an embrace
> That neither one shall know.

She favours the short line, and makes it ring. Her poem " Leaders " of four lines, entered in the Leader Contest, is a splendid thing :

> Purple and power and the pomp of drum
> Do not companion those for whom men wait—
> Leaving the rails unsplit beside the gate,
> Leaving a bench at Galilee, they come !

Children of July will enjoy her " July Night."

> The first July rode in one night
> Astride a charger, with mane unfurled,
> And the myriad sparks his wild hoofs hurled
> Filled the forest with chips of light.
>
> July rode madly through the dark,
> Spurring the mount until he cast
> One silver shoe, that pierced the vast
> Tent of the sky with its flying arc.
>
> The hoof was never re-shod, the sky
> Still wears a gash in its evening blue,
> And strange sparks glimmer the long nights through,
> When it comes July.

Her ballads gallop—quoting from " The Ride of Jack Jouett."

> Dawn's trumpeters were sounding
> As out of the thicket rode
> A strong man flagellated
> By nature's thorny goad,
> His bramble-ravished garments
> In crimson tatters flowed.
> * * *

The White Peacock, by Clement Wood (Harold Vinal); by the same author :—*The Eagle Flies*, *The Earth Turns South*, *Jehovah*, *Glad of Earth*, *The Tide Comes In*, *For Walt Whitman*.

A sense of great expectancy pervades the air when the post brings a new book of Mr. Wood's. I do not forget " The Eagle " sonnets, nor many others. Glancing through " The White Peacock " I am now on page 2 only, and want to give you both 1 and 2 :

OF THESE SONGS

> Here, in this packed Acropolis of Trade,
> Down-torn, up-built constantly, all the place
> Throbs with the hive-roar of a frenzied race
> Scrambling to pocket profits yet unmade.
> The foe without crowd closer, they have laid
> Waste all the outworks ; flags twitch in disgrace ;
> And with serene and dreadfully pitted face

The plague stalks in, speaks, and is obeyed.
And we unheeding, O my dear, we weave
Beauty in little songs that pace the sun—
Songs that will hardly falter, hardly grieve,
When the great flags die earthward one by one:
And heedless Time of all of this will leave
Only these songs to star oblivion.

AD GLORIAM

You who have wed the earth with me,
The fern-furred hill, the galaxy
Of wood-lilies, violets,
Forget-me-nots smaller than regrets.

Trillium singing the year awake,
Fragrant yarrow and rusty brake,
Slim blue forests of bugloss glowing,
White winter hours quietly snowing,—

You, whose green glittering rhyme
Speaks from a bank and shoal of thyme,
Of cardinal bloom and racy mint,
And the tansy's golden scent.

Take this song, with that soft word of
Like to like, that men call love.
May our years still be sweet and long,
And give you tansy for your song.

WARNING

When I have passed beyond your sight and longing,
And all our mated rapture has grown less
Than wind within an empty crater stirring,
When the great wings pass, leaving emptiness,
Then we may dream, you at your jewel-setting,
And I in whatever swift flight knows me then,
Of days that might have fared to full delighting,
Of nights that might have told us less of pain.
It is not sunset, and the hour for dreaming
Is farther, fainter, than a half-seen star:
Nor have we moons past measure for our blooming.
Then let us flaunt the glorious things we are,
Like scarlet lilies glowing, like swift wings
Throbbing together to unvisited things.

TOWARD YOUTH

What would we have, of all of this strained scene
Of dour buffoons comically dodging death?
There is no god but one: and his heart is green—

Let all men tender him their tiniest breath!
Let all the topless towers of Ilion
And all the winding rat-runs and the low
Labyrinths of trade's poor cities one by one
Go where all of man's limping errors go,
Into the grave. Let us be children again,
Let us be wise again, let us be fools,
Let us oblate the long detours of men
To the still spirit of the hidden pools,
The blue roof, the green cover, and the brown
Depths where it is ecstasy to drown.

* * *

This Side of Avalon, by Glenn Ward Dresbach (Harold Vinal); by the same author: *In Colours of the West*, *The Enchanted Mesa and Other Poems*, *Cliff Dwellings and Other Poems*, *Star Dust and Stone*.

GLENN WARD DRESBACH does not linger in city streets or dark musings. He carries us at once out across the beautiful stretches of America's West, and fills our vision with the gift of poets. He knows his world of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter under the arching skies.

WISE GAMBLERS

Four old trees stand tall on a hill,
Wind swirls around them, never still,
And their heads together bow and sway
As if in talk of a game they play.
Sometimes they laugh and sometimes sigh,
And there beneath a low grey sky
I've seen them drop their leaves when thins
The gold and crimson, as near dawn
Wise gamblers drop their cards upon
The table, saying kindly, "Why
Quarrel with a game that no one wins!"

HAWK CIRCLES

Here I have seen wide circles that a hawk
Swung down from blue heights of an upland day
Grow narrow slowly in the casual stalk
Of some soft-furred or sunny-feathered prey.
Unhasting and indifferent in space
It seemed, and light made circles on the grass . . .
But amber eyes were flaming on a place
Where I had seen no more than sunbeams pass.

What gentle thing was basking, well content
With earth, its jewelled circles, blue and gold,
Until on shaken air was imminent

The clutching talons? Turning, I behold
No change . . . Prolific earth and boundless skies—
But some swift shadow chills across my eyes.

Deserts differ in all parts of the world. The Egyptian desert blows us no boughs or cedars—

Bare willows form a straggling line
Along a river lost in drouth,
And swift, side-snapping winds that whine
Rush foam-flecked from the couth,

is the opening verse in his "Desert Penitents."

Then we swing along with him in a "Fiesta," and so we wander with him through the 56 pages of his new and delightful book.

* * *

Miss KATHLEEN MILLAY, sister to the internationally known lyrist, comes to us through her *Hermit Thrush* (Horace Liveright, New York). The honour and drawback of being related to so brilliant a sister carries a double-edged sword. Again a singer, she opens her book with—

"Hear me, hear me,
All ye lonely,
I've a hearth as lone as thine,
I've a song
For singing only
To a heart as lone as mine."

I want to congratulate Miss Millay on the charming form of her book, its size and manner of doing, and now let me speak of the contents:

TIDE

I must go down where the sea is resounding,
I am too far from the sound of the sea;
I must be near where the waters are pounding
A plaint that will never be letting me be!
I must go back where the waves are returning
Ever and ever on shores that are lone,
I am too far from the seas that are burning
Ever and ever on hearts that have known—
Shallows in ledges are echoes of stone.

These songs are delightfully youthful, sung to youth by youth, and one likes to linger a moment to consider what deepening the years may bring to her unquestioned gift.

* * *

Compass Rose, by Elizabeth Coatsworth (Coward-McCann Inc.),

Miss COATSWORTH is known for two volumes of verse, "Fox Footprints" and "Atlas and Beyond." When we reviewed "Fox Footprints" some time ago, she declaimed the right to be among those who made up the Dynamics of American Poetry, but one finds the contradiction here in her poetry.

BREAD THE HOLY

I break my bread. There are the great gold fields
And there the men move with the swaying scythes,
Their wet clothes modelled to their thick slow limbs
Leaving behind them a straight shining path
Where the boys work with knots of stooping women
Behind the sheaves and piling them in place
Like praying hands beneath the summer sky.
Horses unharnessed stand beside their carts
Stamping the flies: a dog lies fast asleep
In hedgerow shadows: now and then a voice
Comes from the gleaners, wells up, murmurs, flows
Into the eddying silence, while above
Silently, slowly, the great clouds are piled
In pale straw-coloured mows against the blue.

Miss Coatsworth is a graduate of Vassar College and holds a Master's degree from Columbia, and is a great traveller.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

Stanford University's contribution to the two-thousandth anniversary of Virgil's birth will be the publication of *Mapheaus Vegius and his Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid: A Chapter on Virgil in the Renaissance*, by Dr. Anna Cox Brinton, acting professor of classical literature at Stanford during the summer. The "Thirteenth Book" takes up the story of Aeneus at the end of Virgil's account, and carries the hero through further adventures to his death and immortalization.

"The present vivid interest in Italian humanism, and that perennial admiration for Virgil which makes his scholars in the twentieth century no strangers to his lovers in the fifteenth, prompts the publication of this study of the most famous and most widely read sequel to the Aeneid," Mrs. Brinton explains. "The answers to the two questions 'Why was The Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid written?' and 'Why was it read and enjoyed all over Europe for more than two hundred years?' throw light on Virgil's spiritual sway over European thought," she continues. "This hitherto unwritten chapter is presented as a contribution to the history of Virgil's influence at the two-thousandth anniversary of his birth, when all the world is preparing to make grateful acknowledgment of the legacy of light and leading of this best-beloved of Roman poets."

VIEWS AND ATTITUDES

Finale of Seem. A lyrical narrative by Walter Lowenfels. (Heinemann, 3s. 6d. p. 92 + xii.) Machine age art was born to serve commerce: McKnight Kauffer (who once painted the Nativity) now draws advertisements for Eno's Fruit Salt; the bastard offspring of Brancusi—geometric book-rests, birds and mannequins in polished wood and metal—gleam in the Magasins du Louvre and in Selfridge's. And certainly this decorative art is beautiful and is beautifying industry (surely a modern limousine is graceful?) but the beauty of machinery arises with its mechanical efficiency in performing some known task, whereas living things, things which reproduce themselves, repair their worn-out tissues and adapt structure and environment to each other, these things serve unknown ends and suffer inexplicable desires. We ask why man exists, and not why he invented traction-engines.

How magnificent in speed is the Lord of Dynamos
Who creates Light—Heat—Power;
how excellent in symmetry
Whose wings are copper flanges
transmuting steam into electric buttons:

writes Mr. Lowenfels, but his enthusiasm for engineering and scientific analysis gives him no satisfaction because, after all, science knows nothing of feelings of value, but only measurable quantities. Until we profess faith in something, value something, no amount of reasoning can prove life is worth living. To-day poets and scientists alike—Lawrence, Whitehead, Eliot, McDougall, Eddington—are seeking that unknown god. And perhaps it may never be found. Perhaps the brain, now grown self-conscious, will prove suicidal, one of nature's failures like her freak experiments in giantism. The spectacle of the greatest intellects of our generation all busy manufacturing deities, or more-or less working models thereof, to save themselves (and, a hundred generations hence, the race) from suicide, is as tragical as it is funny. Humour is, perhaps, the only ultimate escape, but meanwhile Mr. Lowenfels presents to us a sophiscated and diluted version of the sexual solution of D. H. Lawrence:

God is the essence of corporeal desire
spiralling toward infinity
The sublimation of extinction.

To some of us that is no solution at all; the fact that we derive pleasure from that courtship which, among the higher animals, is a natural preliminary to the procreation of offspring, is only an added ignominy if we regard the propagation of the race as worthless. Nevertheless there are times (as in sonnets iv and v), when Mr. Lowenfels converts us momentarily, but he himself passes beyond these simplicities to a renunciation of his early love:

She left in dead winter,
mixing the seasons,

planting August in December,
leaving every day Tuesday
like a stale biscuit in a " house for sale."

Throughout the work such images and cadences (the mark of Mr. Eliot's school) recur : their classical precision cuts into the memory, but occasionally the author allows the intelligence to abdicate to verbal whims and fancies, casual associations as of prunes and prisms. This habit is becoming increasingly common in modern poetry and I suppose its practitioners (Miss Stein for example) would justify themselves somewhat as follows :

" The world is what we think : artists think in form and colour, musicians in harmony and rhythms, poets in words and rhythm.—*Hé voila*, for us the world consists of words and rhythms—not the smooth-worn counters of a logical machine but fresh, bright, magical words. To make sense, then, we must write what the words and the rhythm dictate."

I think this attitude is born of fear, fear which arises when we realize that there is no foundation to human knowledge, that it is a framework with neither beginning nor end. Only strength of mind (pigheadedness if you will) enables us to go on even though we have no certainty, no reasonable hope, only those momentary glimpses we call beauty. Thus it is that Mr. Lowenfels, in his flight towards the unknown star, passes into what is, for those who lack his precise experience, an obscurity, and then emerges suddenly into the clear light revealing an incidental beauty and a rare felicity of phrasing. For all readers to whom poetry is something more than prettiness, the sonnet V. ii will be magnificent. In 1950, when Mr. Lowenfels has written something greater, such early fruits (hardly yet touching on ripeness) will be grabbed by all anthologists.

Mr. Humbert Wolfe apologetically contributes a boosting prefatory note saying he disapproves of prefaces. A few notes would certainly have been more useful. If you believe that all good verse yields up its beauty like concentrated scent at the first casual sniff, avoid this book.

Cosmogony, by E. T. Whiffen (Walter Neal, New York, no price given) is written in blank verse and is described by the author as an " Evolution-Epic." He describes how according to the nineteenth theories of cosmogony and evolution life appeared in the earth in its diverse forms:—

So forms remain still in amœbic-life
Now on the earth. While other-parenting,
New-parted, new-served functions upward climbed
As higher-ordered, which in turn grew up,
Æoned and æoned through, enormous-timed,
By narrowing-functioned differentiate,
Transmitting to their offspring the like-trend.

Mr. Whiffen is unlikely to please readers who do not already share his enthusiastic approval of the present state of civilization.

The Leslie Stephen Lecture was delivered this year by Professor Abercrombie and it has now been published at half-a-crown by the Cambridge University Press under the title of *Progress in Literature*. He argues that man's habit of mind has developed from the "synthetic" to the "analytic" and that a corresponding change has taken place in literature. This seems safe enough, and he makes no pronouncement on the value of change, his only positive conclusion being that epics are produced only by a "synthetic" habit and are therefore unlikely to be written to-day except by biological "sports."

Joseph Auslander and Frank Hill have now completed a *Winged Horse Anthology* (Doubleday, Doran & Co., $3.50), to illustrate their popular outline of poetry, *The Winged Horse*. With sublime confidence the anthologists claim that they have included "the best poetry and only that" forgetting that "beauty" and "excellence" are not absolute but depend on the reader. On judging the selection we must remember this and also that the book is "intended especially for those who are beginning to read poetry." Subject to that limitation, the selection is excellent, though a little disappointing to the experienced reader; there are no remarkable surprises. The passages of Marlowe and Shakespeare which "every schoolboy knows" are all included, and, deprived of their dramatic context, lose considerably. More space is allotted to Whitman than is usual in England; Herrick is given more than Donne; among the moderns we find nothing by Graves, Eliot, Hopkins, Ransom, Cummings, Dixon, Pound, Blunden or Monro, and in general only the juvenalia of living poets are included, but this is comprehensible when we remember the compilers' aims: they have included only those poems or fragments which make an immediate appeal to the normal reader.

A second edition of Mr. George McCloskey's *Flight of Guinevere and Other Poems* has now been published (Authors & Publishers Corporation, N.Y., $2) with revisions and considerable additions. Mr. McCloskey's English versification is usually competent but devoid of any special urbency being, indeed, the exercise of a prosaic Tennyson. In a few poems, such as "Absence," "Times and Eternity" and "The Caravan," he seems, however, to communicate a genuine experience, and in French he sometimes achieves a sensuous beauty which is absent from the English poems:—

Le soleil fuit en flamme;
Dans l'ombre tout s'enfuit
Et je ne suis qu'une âme
Dont le corps c'est la nuit.

The book, printed in double-leaded Caslon on an all-rag paper, is very pleasantly produced.

Readers and admirers of Eva Gore-Booth will appreciate the complete edition of her *Poems*, published by Longmans, Green & Co. Every phase of her life and work is here—the fire of indignation against social wrongs, the enthusiasm for the smallest thing that was beautiful, the constancy of her unlimited affection, and faith in a harmonious plan in spite of the sufferings of the individual—all proclaimed with restraint and tolerance, framed in lovely imagery, and shot through with unfailing tenderness.

The poem selected for quotation is a hitherto unpublished one :—

" A Moment's Experience.

Ah ! push aside the vail of hate and strife,
And gaze, if but for a white moment's while,
Beyond the meagre bitterness of strife,
Into Eternity's most secret smile,

Catching a glimpse of that mysterious hour
When the world's purpose shines beyond its plan,
The sunset palace and the ivory tower
Of him who shall be called the Son of Man.

The translators of Carl Spitteler's *Selected Poems* (Putnam, 10s. 6d.) are Ethel Colbourn Mayne and James F. Muirhead. They have scarcely done complete justice to the author, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1919. His originality of theme and incident and some of his charm is still apparent, but there is a tendency to turn his whimsicality into a racy colloquialism. The Bell Songs are the most attractive, and especially the philosophy of the Full-Toned Note :—

No hue is too bright,
Paint all your delight !
For good-will and glad-heart
Are the marrow of art.

Sonnets of Silence, by M. A. R. Y. (Lane, 6s.) : Nobody can write a sonnet sequence—and this contains 500 poems—without incurring a mental comparison with the accepted great sonnet writers. These do not come very well out of that test. Though pleasantly written and correctly constructed, they make no deeper impression than one of fluency.

Dr. Arthur S. Way has added *The Odes of Bacchylides* (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.) to his many scholarly translations of the classics. While retaining its natural conventionalism, the verse has received the necessary variety of treatment to secure the lucidity that is also natural to it. Ode XI is quoted chiefly on account of its brevity :—

(For Teisias of Ægina, on his victory in wrestling at the Nemean games.)

O Klio, Queen of Song, to my beseeching,
Hearken, if ever thou hast heard my cry!
Be my soul's all-wise pilot by whose teaching
I may sing worthily.
Me to Ægina's blest isle Victory bringing,
To princely hosts there halloweth my hymn,
Biddeth extol the god-built burg with singing,
And him whose fame through Nemea now is ringing,
Her wrestler mighty of limb.

Out of the many books written on prosody, it is interesting to come upon one undertaking an unusual method. In *A Course of English Poetry* by J. H. Francis (Cambridge University Press, 4s.), the student is introduced to English poetry chronologically and is shown various points of verse technique at each phase. The book contains liberal quotations, and some searching interrogations are added to every chapter.

Love and the Virgins, by Charles R. Jury (Oxford University Press, 5s.) is a play written largely in blank verse, about the love of Helena and Agapenor. Poetic drama is unpopular nowadays, but this book, however seldom it may be presented on the stage, should be widely read for the beauty of its lines. The scene is set in Arcadia and peopled with satyrs—unusually attractive ones—gods and mortals, through whose midst winds a chorus of nymphs with songs reminiscent of Comus. Silenus is here a delightful old ruffian, with a sagacity worthy of his divinity, but perhaps Musæus speaks the loveliest poetry; he is a philosopher too:

"This is the ancient sorrow, 'tis the grief
That life waits not on hope. The inward angel
Of thought's desired perfection, who forebodes
His counterpart in joy—in this rough star
Of souls competitive, we needs must mourn
That pure perfection lost; and yet, my child,
We find our consolation here, so sweetly
Time with his touch makes music of the world;
And when the hope is fallen, its broken beauty,
Even as the marble fragments of old dreams
Once form-investitured, and still most fair,
May be most nobly loved. Accept this comfort,
If I, whose heart stands now meridian, may
Comfort the morning's grief."

One can find many such passages throughout the book and the author seems only to be beginning his song; we hope that he will soon give us more.

Alice Mary Kimball certainly seems to know quite a lot about women . . . New England women. Whether she gauges their characters correctly or not, her book of poems, *The Devil is a Woman* (Knopf, 7s. 6d.) is interesting and amusing. She writes fluent blank verse, and every now and then she uses a bizarre word, or an unexpected phrase which adds spice to her highly-flavoured writing. Humorously bitter, and humorously cynical, it is a book that will find many readers among those who appreciate keen insight and clever workmanship.

* * *

" Ah God ! To see the branches stir
Across the moon at Grantchester "
wrote Rupert Brooke ;
" When you are old and grey and full of sleep " . . .
wrote W. B. Yeats ;
" Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills
While the still morn went out with sandals grey "
wrote John Milton.

These are fragments that will set the eyes of thousands dreaming ; three fragments out of thousands of others that will do the same ; phrases that are known and loved. They are loved by many because of the associations they hold—memories of summer evenings in still gardens, echoes of quiet, well-loved voices—because of the poets' victory over the prosaic bonds of technique, because of the visions they bring before the eyes, and, above all, because the writer himself loved the lines he wrote.

Inspiration is not just divine fire ; it is the result of the co-ordination of technique and imagination, and that poetic sense without which rhymes will be the progeny of a tortured brain, and all verse weary, stale, and unprofitable. It has been said that poetry is " the perfect expression of a perfect impression "—the poet's mind, that is to say, must be willing to receive beauty before his verse will reflect its glow. It adds enormously to the enjoyment of poetry to realize that the poet is not merely the tool of some prolific deity ; there must be an active assistance from the earthbound departments of metre, rhythm, and rhyme before verse can ever be called " inspired."

In a valuable book, Mr. Phosphor Mallam has explained some of the mysteries of great poetry (*An Approach to Poetry*, Methuen, 3s. 6d.), and he deals, in concise and explicit wording, with many of the essentials and eccentricities of the poet's mind, illustrating his statements with well-chosen quotations.

As he points out, in several instances, the enjoyment of poetry depends, to an extent that is unsuspected by many, upon the reader. The reader must start upon even ground with the poet, and try to

allow the ideas which the poet has expressed in fine words and images come also to his own mind, as he reads, leading him to a fuller realization of the channels along which the author's thoughts have run.

Another important piece of advice that Mr. Mallam offers is that "the lover of poetry will soon realize that the one way of feeling fully the roll and swing of metre and rhythm" (and of appreciating the music and colour of the words) "is to read poetry aloud."

This is a book for all who want to know "why" and "how," and a book that should give fuller and a richer meaning to that lazy and comprehensive word "inspiration."

Mr. Alfred Noyes has written a short novel, *The Return of the Scarecrow* (Cassells, 5s. net), which may be read as an amusing extravaganza or more pertinently as a satire on literary and social fads and attitudes, including the insincerity of modern verse and criticism. Application for dates for schools' and local verse speaking examinations should be made to The Registrar, The Poetry Society (Incorporated), London, W.C.1, as early as possible in the autumn.

Though Lord Dunsany's poetry is widely known and appreciated, no collection of his poems has yet been published in book form. So far his poems have been known only through publication in English and American journals and through quotations in the author's lectures and plays. Now a volume will be published by Putnam, with the title *Fifty Poems by Lord Dunsany*, in the early autumn.

The Cornhill, maintaining its own high literary traditions, is publishing a series of letters written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning from Florence in the '40's to her sister Henrietta, full of homely news and comment, and incidentally illustrating her statement that "he [R.B.] is *perfect* to me—that's the only word to be used," although he did not like her writing for the magazines, not even for *Blackwood's*.

* * *

Mr. Alfred Noyes in his preface to *Selected Verse*, by R. C. Lehmann, which Messrs. Wm. Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., will publish shortly, 5s. net., includes the poems of the author in the Falernian school of Cambridge poets, of which Calverley, J. K. Stephen and Sir Owen Seaman are outstanding examples. Humour and scholarship present the jest in rippling lines of airy grace touched here and there by the quiet sadness of *anni fugaces*. In this volume are collected his most memorable work including his poems on animals ("Rufus" is the best known poem of its kind in the language). Mr. Noyes says, "There is a warmth of humanity and a large heartedness in these poems which give them a permanent appeal of character and personality."

* * *

A reader is anxious to trace a poem, *Lines on an English Sheep Dog*, originally published in a magazine and ascribed to a soldier killed in the war.

PREMIUM AWARDS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We welcome a number of new-comers to our far-flung Fellowship, and hope their work will gain admission into THE POETRY REVIEW shortly. We would like to hear more frequently from some of our older members, especially those in China, India, Brazil, and the West Indies, from whom we have nothing before us on this occasion, and we shall be glad to resume the occasional meetings of the Fellowship in London if members will let us know they desire them.

The general reader has not yet taken part in the selection of notable POETRY REVIEW short poems. We still need a greater, wider expression of preference, and we wish those who join in the plebiscite would go farther back than the last two or three years. Among the lists of "Poems I have Enjoyed" that have reached us is the following selection :—

"But Plato," by Joseph Auslander, January, 1929; "In a German Field," A. D. L. Wilson, September, 1927; "A Prayer for Joy," Vera I. Arlett, January, 1927; "The Birthday Gift," Edith M. Walker, November, 1926; "A Dog," Sydney Snell, May, 1926.

Mr. A. E. Dewey writes: "The poem in recent issue to my mind the most perfect is 'Harvest,' March, 1929; it is very beautiful and I only wish I could write such."

Miss M. Forbes Myers "desires to say that 'A Calling' by Walter Owen, in January, 1928, is the poem I have most appreciated as an almost flawless example of what a love lyric should be, and, in my opinion, is equal to Mrs. Browing's 'Sonnets from the Portuguese,' for beauty and true poetry."

Mrs. Cullabine selects "The Vagabond," G. E. Merrick, September, 1927; Markham's "Lincoln," May, 1927; and "Dreams," Mina C. Martin, September, 1927, and Miss M. E. Rose names the following "four exquisite 'little poems' which have appeared in THE POETRY REVIEW": "To a handful of Anemone Petals," XVII, 162; "A Winter Sunset," XVIII, 4; "Evening Song," XVIII, 8; and "The Bermudas," XVIII, 74. Among Miss M. O. Curle's "favourite recent poems," are "If this Green Earth," May, 1926; "Prayer for Joy," January, 1927; "An Offering," November, 1927, and "Lost Skill," May, 1928. Miss M. Clarke, the Minnesota President of the American Poetry Circle, likes particularly "To Omar," Mary Alethea Woodward, May, 1929.

The awards in the Cathedral contest have reached us, but not a detailed report. Mr. Alfred Noyes was the final adjudicator and confirmed the findings of the majority of the other members of the Board, including the President-General of The Poetry Society, the American Editor, Archbishop Freeman, of Washington, and Mrs. Percy Stewart, the donor of the premium, the result being :—

1st, Joseph Auslander, New York.

2nd, " John Silver " Northampton, and James M. Tyng, Long Island, N.Y.

3rd. Dr. Mary Brent Whiteside, Atlanta, Ga.

4th, E. F. Alden, Haddenham, Bucks.

Our usual premium in slight recognition of exquisite work is divided between Beatrice Eve, Weybridge ; Redcliffe M'Kie, Brighton; Silvia Dobson, Tulse Hill; Almon Ponsonby, Fleet; Bertha M. Skeat, Sedbergh, and Dulcie Eden Osborne, Silcoates, for beautiful pictures and ideas, finely expressed.

We highly commend poems by:—

E. F. A., Haddenham
Ernest Alcock, Lampton
Vera Arlett, Worthing
K. O'Neill Bailey, Bexhill
E. R. Bennington, Louth
D. Bernard, Ringwood
W. B. Blake, New Haven
J. S. Brown, Bexhill
M. H. Cooper, Columbus
E. Couchman, Rickmansworth
N. K. Cruickshank, Bury
C. Dayton, New York
A. E. Dewey, Wandsworth
Eva Dobell, Stroud
J. M. Dougall, Hereford
Barbara Drummond, Winchester.
G. W. Eustace, Arundel
E. M. Fison, Felixstowe
C. E. Garrett, Ludlow
A. K. Gilbert, Washington
P. M. Goodman, Walberswick
S. Val Green, Monk Seaton
E. Hall, Haines, W.12
E. Joyce Harrison, Lincoln
Alma M. Jewell, Tulsa
Maurice Kerner, Brooklyn
N. Lennox, N. Kensington
W. K. Lewis, Ramsgate
E. Melbourne, Belvedere
Edith Merick, Washington
G. E. Merrick, Warminster
M. Forbes Myers, Bournemouth
M. Newton, Purley
E. Nolan, Rome
I. Ormsby Addiscombe
M. Pollard, Church Stretton
John Purdie, Paisley
M. E. Pyne, Chelmsford
J. W. Robinson, Eccles
M. Robinson, Eccles
D. Rose, Pikesville
D. Scouloudi, Kensington
John Silver, Northampton
Florida Watts Smyth, St. Louis
B. E. Smythe, Perth
I. M. Stenning, Rye
M. K. Toovey, Amersham
E. M. Turner, Ottery St. Mary
E. M. Walker, Bournemouth

Another Charles Alva Lane Premium.

Again the profound . . . Mr. Lane repeats his challenging offer for the most " profound " poem, dealing with the hidden walls of fact and feeling, and their strange inter-relation in the lives of men.—See page 358.

The length of a poem does not always mark its breadth, and preferably the Poetry Premium committee is asking for the shorter presentments of this subject.

We commend Mr. Lane, a scholarly and thoughtful man, for stressing again the importance of the poet's consideration of this subject without walls. It draws one to effort through its very difficulties, and we hope will bring to us equally fine considerations as a year ago.

Mr. Lane's prize is $100. The contest is open to all, and will close May 15th next. Manuscripts should be typed, and the name and address of the authors written on the upper left corner, and should be addressed to Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, Convener, 299 Park Avenue, New York. All poems must be original. No poems will be returned, and the unplaced MSS are the property of the authors after the contest is closed and prizes awarded.

£50 ($250) Prizes for Poems on Power

The Editor of the American section of The Poetry Review, provides a premium of $250 for the best poems on Power in its broadest acceptance as evinced by such individual personalities as Edison, the Wright Brothers, Marconi, Mussolini, Roosevelt, Elihu Root, Bernard Shaw, George Grey Barnard, Foch, Gen. Haig, Nelson, Baldwin, Macdonald, Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Sargent, *et hoc genus omne*.

The poems may concern not only the genius of to-day, but the genius of the past, and a prophetic outlook on the future.

The first prize will be $150; second $50; third $25; and the balance at the discretion of the adjudicators. Manuscripts should be typed; the name and address of the authors written on the upper left corner, and should reach Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, Convener, 299 Park Avenue, New York, not later than October 15th. More than one poem may be sent. As we have reason to know, Mrs. Bartlett favours the sonnet form, but any form is acceptable. The shorter poems are desired. No MSS. will be returned, but unsuccessful poems are the property of the authors after the contest is closed and prizes awarded.

More New Premium Offers

Mr. Arthur A. Paul follows the excellent example of Mr. Lewis and provides a premium of three guineas for "Conscience." "I am all in favour of originality of theme. On this account I think a poetical narrative drama in three acts is worth consideration, each stanza to represent an act, which must rhyme. It can be either Comedy or Tragedy. Each stanza or act should contain not more than three dozen lines, the plot to be original, not too true to life, but of perfect construction." This is a novel them and a novel treatment is suggested. MSS. should be addressed "The Paul Premium, The Poetry Review Office." Closing date November 25th.

Miss M. L. Nott, who has been associated actively with The Poetry Society since its formation, and is a prominent member of the Bristol Branch of the League for the Prohibition of Cruel Sports, provides a

premium of two guineas for a poem or poems against "Blood Sports" about which many of our contributors must feel very deeply and warmly and be able to express themselves with eloquent and bitter fervour and indignation. We want a companion to Ralph Hodgson's well known little lyric. The scope of the subject, the need for vigorous protest, and the sympathy expressed by well-known people may be gathered from the June issue of the journal of the League, "Cruel Sports" (which, by the way, includes a poem by our contributor Erda Lang) or any other issue of the monthly magazine, a copy of which may be obtained from Mr. H. B. Amos, the Editor and Secretary, 101 Chandos House, Palmer Street, S.W.1. We make no conditions as to length or style of treatment, except that "free verse" is barred, and shall be glad to receive poems up to November 20th, addressed "The Nott Premium," THE POETRY REVIEW Office.

Mr. Walter K. Lewis provides three guineas for poems on "The Human Eye"—that wonderful organ which is responsible for so much joy and admiration in human life. The poems, which should be epigrammatic and not too physiological, should reach us not later than September 25th, addressed "The Lewis Premium, THE POETRY REVIEW, 16 Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.1."

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," the Poet's Fellowship, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, before October 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, or international coupon, and, if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (If a more detailed postal criticism is desired, 5s. should be sent.)

* * *

The autumn Session of the Hampstead Centre of the Poetry Society will be opened by the usual "At Home" on Saturday, September 28th, 7.30 to 10 p.m., when the programme will consist of music and recitation and a quotations competition, particulars of which will be announced on the evening. Will members consider this notice an invitation to attend, as no further intimation will be issued. Members are asked to invite friends, a charge of one shilling will be made for admission for each visitor.

The following programme has been arranged:

October 1st, Prologues and Epilogues.

October 15th, John Skelton, Edmund Spenser, and Ben Jonson.

November 5th, Plots and Treasons.

The meetings are held at 8.15 p.m. at Miss Julie Huntsman's Studios, 150 Finchley Road, N.W.3.

Any further information respecting the work of the Centre can be obtained from the Assistant Honorary Secretary, Miss Margaret Huntsman, 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3.

SHAKESPEARE AND MASONRY

The New National Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon

THE laying of the foundation stone of the new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon by the Pro-Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons (Lord Ampthill), assisted by the chief officers of the Grand Lodge, was an impressive, dignified, and picturesque ceremony. The Poetry Society, which has contributed materially to the re-building and endowment funds, both as a body and through many of its members, was represented by the Lady Maud Warrender, President-General, who, as notified in the last issue of The Poetry Review, has been elected the Society's representative on the Board of Governors, and Chevalier Galloway Kyle. The American Editor of The Poetry Review, who has substantially assisted in promoting interest in the enterprise in New York, was also present, together with several vice-presidents, including Sir Frank Benson and Sir Barry Jackson (Governors), Sir Ronald Storrs, and the Earl of Sandwich.

Viscount Burnham, in asking on behalf of the Governors Lord Ampthill "to perform the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of our new National Theatre according to the consecrated usage of English life and Masonic tradition," said: "This is a beautiful site and a beautiful scene. Shakespeare never forgot his 'Woody Warwickshire.' The Theatre, and the Curtain, though in London town, were still 'in the fields,' and wild flowers could be gathered within a stone's throw of the doors of the place where her Majesty's servants were performing. So it is here, as it is fit and meet it should be. In the Royal licence of 1603 issued to William Shakespeare and his fellow actors, James I, of learned memory, asked that 'they should be allowed such further courtesies as hath been given to men of their place and qualities, and also that further favour you shall show to them our servants for our sake we shall take friendly at your hands.' Our gracious Sovereign King George, happily in renewed health, sits on King James's throne, and as our own Royal Patron, who granted a charter to us six months before the fire destroyed the old theatre, commands us all in like fashion. May we hope that this place may be, in the heart of England, a temple of concord and conciliation between the nations of the world, not unworthy of the name of Shakespeare."

The M. W. Pro-Grand Master, addressing the assembly, said: "We, the officers of the Grand Lodge of England, thank you for your courteous welcome, and we offer our respectful salutations to you and the members of your Council. We are greatly honoured by your invitation, and in obedience to your wishes we shall now proceed with the ceremony which we have come prepared to perform in accordance with ancient customs and time-honoured traditions of our fraternity. It is, indeed, a very old English custom that you are reviving to-day,

as in days long ago it frequently happened, more particularly in this part of the country, that the Freemasons were invited to lay the foundation stones of churches and other buildings for the use of the community, even though as a body they had nothing to do with the erection and cost of those buildings. . . . We rejoice to think that through our representation English Freemasonry will be associated with a national event which is regarded with sympathetic interest by the lovers of culture and humanity in every part of the world. . . . We are here assembled, in the presence of you all, to assist in laying in ancient form the foundation stone of this building, to be a house to commemorate the name of William Shakespeare, and to promote that dramatic art of which he gave the greatest example to the world. We pray God it may prosper by becoming a place of concord for good men and women, for the promotion of harmony and brotherly love throughout the world until time itself shall be no more."

Having performed the Masonic rites Lord Ampthill said: "Is there any idea on anything that is good and great which cannot be better expressed by quoting Shakespeare than in any other way, unless it be by quoting the Bible? Every day of our lives we all quote Shakespeare without knowing it, and that is the measure of his influence on English life and thought—aye, and on the thought of the modern world. Let me show you what I mean. 'I could a tale unfold,' as the Ghost said to Hamlet, but the reflections which I should exchange with you would be "caviare to the general.' The matter, therefore, is one on which it is best to follow the precept which Hamlet gave to Horatio when he said: 'Give it an understanding, but no tongue.' It would ill become me to let these 'enterprizes of great pitch and moment' be 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' and surrounded as I am with that wonderful apparatus which harnesses the ether to the brazen trumpets of the loud speaker, it would be a rank offence if I were to 'drown the stage with tears and cleave the general ear with horrid speech.' How many people know that it was Polonius who remarked to the King that 'brevity is the soul of wit,' and that, like many others who have unwittingly quoted the remark, he did so in the midst of a very long-winded speech? The questions which have arisen to-day are these: 'What have Freemasons as such to do with Shakespeare, and what did Shakespeare know about Freemasonry?' The answer to the first question is that Freemasonry as it exists to-day originated from that same national spirit which inspired Shakespeare; the spirit which his immortal verse has made part and parcel of our being as a people. As for the second question, I command my brother Masons to ponder over the words which Shakespeare put into the lips of Polonius—

> 'If circumstances lead me, I will find
> Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
> Within the centre.'"

TO-DAY

BEAUTY is rare as still water :
The quiet, proud beauty of women
Walking with high, fair heads ; like Helen
Stealing lustre from the stars—
Of whom the poets write.

We see a beauty drawn together,
Tautened to a china likeness:
Hard eyes and falsely scarlet mouths,
Bronze carved hair, trained and trim.
These are our ladies now.
They are dealing cards to Vice with laughter,
And watching, not sunset on the shadowed hills,
But paper pounds drifting down New Bond Street.

We have gone a-seeking after other gods,
Nor see the sorrows drowning Helen's eyes.

ALMON PONSONBY.

"Poise and Grace in Poetry."

Typical of many reports of the Society's verse-speaking examinations indicative of the importance attached to and the recognition accorded these valuable examinations is the following from the *Western Press* of July 25th :—

> The Poetry Society's examiners in verse-speaking, in reporting on their recent visit to Clifton, where a general examination in the art of reading and speaking verse has been held by the society annually for 17 years, placed on record their very deep and sincere appreciation of the general excellence of the work done in a very sympathetic atmosphere. They have never felt so great a satisfaction before. What they heard was a great delight and inspiration to all concerned and represented in almost every case a cultivated love of poetry and a recognition of its significance.
>
> "Added to the pleasant and cultivated voices which have always been a feature at Clifton, there is now perceptible a remarkable poise, being the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, of balanced personality, and a harmonious combination of physical and mental qualities which must be of immense value to the young people themselves, and a great gratification to their teachers who have been able to produce these examples of real education. There is apparently

a general absence of the common faults of fading out at line endings, and a quiet grace and self-possession are shown by the speakers generally, with few traces of artificiality and forced expression. The younger ones are remarkable for this easy self-possession.

"Interpretation, too, is of a very high order, the ideal of the Poetry Society being approached by this evidence of a clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it."

The examiners agreed that "the schools' or leaving gold medal candidates deserve this junior award, which is the recognition of not only excellent work now at their particular stage of development, but also the culmination of fine preliminary work. They were not so satisfied with the adult gold medal candidates, agreeing that while they were very fine they did not fully represent the artistic excellence necessary for the gold medal, which must be considered the highest award for this work. It postulates exceptional finish and sustained expression and complete absorption by the poems."

Application for dates for schools and local verse speaking examinations should be made to The Registrar, The Poetry Society (Incorporated), London, W.C.1, as early as possible in the autumn.

ANNIVERSARY

I remember
Drawn blinds,
Cold faces,
Frozen minds.

I remember
Cold rain,
Pitiless
On the pane.

I remember
Long streets,
Hollow footsteps,
Counterfeits.

I remember
Emptiness,
Long days
Meaningless.

These are over
At the last;
These are fading,
Sorrow past.

Stare again,
Dry-eyed,
Cold comfort,
These abide.

My mother's love, not spoken,
My mother's face, all wan,
My little house, all broken,
My little home, all gone.

MICHAEL ROBERTS.

THE PRACTICE OF CRITICISM

THE literary squabbles of the last four centuries have been as bitter as religious feuds and, unless poets and their readers are exceptionally vicious, unintelligent and spiteful, the fault must lie with language. The study of mechanics only began to advance when words like " force " were restricted to one precise meaning defined by an equation, leaving no room for misunderstanding and quarrelling. The objectivity of physical science has thus earned universal respect; but those who have studied sixteenth-century texts in which the words for " force " are used for " force," " momentum," " energy," " acceleration," " impulse," indiscriminately and vaguely as they are to-day in common conversation, will know how difficult it is to come to any reasonable understanding of the work of men who were, we must presume, no less intelligent than we.

In literary criticism the twin-roots of the trouble have been ambiguity and the assumption that the existence of a word proved the existence of a corresponding entity. Terms like " beautiful," " ugly," " sentimental " which express the speaker's emotion have been recklessly applied as though they described some objective quality of the poem criticized. More cautious critics confine their attention to technique, for all criticism which is not technical criticism is a statement about the critic's own psychology, or a guess about his reader's, or an attempt to produce some other work of art. It is in fact not criticism.

Even the technical critic has his limitations: he must not say " ' Morn ' and ' dawn ' are imperfect rhymes, therefore this is a bad poem," unless he can show that the defective rhyme was an accident or a desperate expedient which contributes nothing to the effect the poet was attempting to produce, and " in matters of great importance the critic must not coerce, and he must not make judgments of worse or better. He must simply elucidate: the reader will then form the correct judgment for himself."

Unfortunately these words of Mr. Eliot suggest that he is speaking only of the professional critic, whereas every

reader is necessarily a critic. As Mr. Eliot says a little later in the same book :[1]

"We might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it."

Since those words were written we have been deluged with critical analyses of criticism : criticism has grown self-conscious ; and if the output of gushing rhetorical "appreciation" has been somewhat diminished this is due largely to the work of Mr. I. A. Richards[2] who has now published his *Practical Criticism* (Kegan Paul, 12/6), a work which is acute, amusing and exceedingly important.

The definition of poetry is as dangerous as it is difficult, and Mr. Richards wisely fears to tread where so many have disastrously rushed in. It is possible, after all, that the difference between poetry and prose is not one of kind but of degree, and there may be more than one quality to be considered. Mr. Richards, indeed, distinguishes four functions of human speech, all of which are usually confounded in the one term "Meaning." First we have the *Sense*, the plain presentation of items (facts) for consideration ; then the implication of *Feeling* about these items ; then the *Tone* which expresses the speaker's attitude to his readers ; and finally the *Intention* which governs the entire form and substance of the utterance. This analysis is aptly illustrated :

What rank and precedence shall we assign to the four language functions if we analyse public utterances made in the midst of a General Election ? Function 4, the furtherance of intentions (of all grades of worthiness) is unmistakably predominant. Its instruments are Function 2, the expression of feelings about causes, policies, leaders and opponents, and Function 3, the establishment of favourable relations with the audience ("the great heart of the people"). Recognizing this, ought we to be pained or surprised that Function 1, the presentation of facts (or of objects of thought to be regarded as facts are regarded), is equally subordinated ? But further consideration of

[1] *The Sacred Wood.* Methuen.

[2] Author of *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Science and Poetry.* Part-author of *The Meaning of Meaning* and *The Foundations of Aesthetics.*

this situation would lead us into a topic that must be examined later, that of Sincerity, a word with several important meanings.

On the other hand, the writer of a scientific treatise has a quiet, respectful *Tone* settled for him by academic convention and his *Intention* will be confined to the clear and adequate presentation of his facts and arguments, *Feeling* about his subject will be subordinate to *Sense*. The existence of a suitable vocabulary, meaning the same thing to all men, makes expression comparatively easy for the scientist: things which can be measured can be clearly defined and words are used in a sense which is a narrow abstraction from their primitive meaning. In zoology the word heart bears no suggestion of affection, it is more cardiac than cordial. This last word, "cordial" is a type of word which is extremely rare. Shorn completely of a "scientific" sense it can be used of the emotions without the usage being labelled "metaphorical." In general, the vocabulary of emotion is as crude as it is poor: all the words in use are vague and evoke responses varying from one man to another according to their reading and experience. Consequently the poet struggling to express emotion must use the metaphoric sense of words: "Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars."

If we assume those words to be used in any scientific sense, the best of poetry appears sheer imbecility. But the imbecility is ours, not the poet's.

But these indirect devices for expressing feeling through logical irrelevance and nonsense, through statements not to be taken strictly, literally and seriously, though pre-eminently apparent in poetry, are not peculiar to it. A great part of what passes for criticism comes under this head. It is much harder to obtain statements about poetry, than expressions of feelings towards it. . . . Dr. Bradley's remark that *Poetry is a spirit*, and Dr. Mackail's that it is *a continuous substance or energy whose progress is immortal* are eminent examples that I have made use of elsewhere, so curious that I need no apology for referring to them again.

It is only fair to point out that these pseudo-statements about poetry fall naturally into two classes: those which are admittedly a rhetorical expression of feeling and those in which a vague highsounding reminiscence of scientific

terminology is intended to bamboozle the reader into the belief that the writer is talking sense. Wordsworth's dictum: "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science"[1] is an example of the first type. It has meaning though very little sense, whereas "Poetry is the most highly organized form of intellectual activity" is dishonest in intention, pretentious in tone and lacks both sense and feeling.

There is another point which, I think, Mr. Richards has failed to make: it is always possible that a poet may perpetrate nonsense for the sake of sense; he may be convinced that the existing structure of language is not adequate to express even the unemotional aspects of experience. It should be remembered that the most successful of the sciences has been driven, by the imperfections of normal speech, to express itself in its own language, mathematics. Though difficult, it is not unreasonable that some modern poets should attempt this expression (among other things) by means of comparatively slight modifications of syntax and vocabulary. To become poetry such writing must of course express something more than sense. The recent work of Mr. Robert Graves and Miss Laura Riding may be cited.

Our study of the four kinds of meaning will be made much easier if we remember that, in "primitive" languages there are few words, one word must serve to name a dozen different things, or rather, in naming those things which are to us plainly distinguishable, "primitive" man perceives, not an abstraction, but some common quality which escapes the civilized man. "We must, therefore, imagine a time when 'spiritus' or πνεῦμα, or older words from which these had descended, meant neither *breath*, nor '*wind*' nor 'spirit,' nor yet all three of these things, but when they simply had *their own peculiar meaning*, which has since, in the course of the evolution of consciousness,

[1] Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.

crystallized into the three meanings specified." From the same work[1] we must quote another passage :

> Men do not *invent* those mysterious relations between separate external objects, and between objects and feelings, which it is the function of poetry to reveal. These relations exist independently, not indeed of Thought, but of any individual thinker. . . . The language of primitive men reports them as direct perceptual experience. The speaker has perceived a unity, and is not therefore himself conscious of *relation*. But we, in the development of consciousness, have lost the power to see this one as one. Our sophistication, like Odin's, has cost us an eye ; and now it is the language of poets, in so far as they create true metaphors, which must restore this unity conceptionally after it has been lost from perception. Thus, the " before-unapprehended " relationships of which Shelley spoke, are in a sense " forgotten " relationships. For though they were never yet apprehended, they were at one time seen. And imagination can see them again.

I think it is quite possible to reconcile the major contentions of Mr. Barfield with those of Mr. Richards : the former is preoccupied with semantics ; the latter with psychology. Mr. Barfield states that " æsthetic emotion " accompanies a " change of consciousness." Mr. Richards is describing the same phenomenon in other language when he calls it a psychological readjustment. If human evolution is the history of successive developments of consciousness or psychological adjustments, making man capable of finer and more appropriate responses to external stimuli, surely the poet who is ahead of his generation will, by the use of " figurative " language, bring about the necessary changes in his readers, and it is quite possible that in doing this he will make use of submerged racial memories of earlier modes of consciousness in the manner described above.

We are now approaching the subject of Response : this has been studied by Mr. Richards in a novel manner. He presented unsigned poems to his students at Cambridge and they, after reading the poems on not less than four distinct occasions, wrote out their honest opinions, in the safe assurance that their anonymity would be closely guarded. The results are astonishing and terrifying ; we

[1] Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (Faber & Gwyer, 1928).

begin to realize how much a matter of tradition and snobbery most literary judgments are. For those who have the courage to try, he reprints the poems as he originally used them; the authors' names only appear on a folded sheet at the back of the book.

The argument is enlivened by hundreds of extracts from opinions obtained in this way, and a careful study of them reveals a number of critical traps which, for the purposes of this review, may be set out under six headings.

The first (often the result of careless or insufficient reading) is *failure to make out the sense.*

> In most poetry the sense is as important as anything else; it is quite as subtle, and as dependent on the syntax, as in prose; it is the poet's chief instrument to other aims when it is not itself his aim. . . . But to say this . . . is not to say we can wrench the sense free from the poem, screw it down to a prose paraphrase, and then take the doctrine of our prose passage, and the feelings this doctrine excites in us, as the burden of the poem.

Obviously not. But how many children are daily taught to do so?

Difficulties of understanding may arise, for example, between two people, one of whom uses visual imagery for mental representation while the other does not. Some poets (and most philosophers) are non-visualizers: to some minds words themselves call up feelings as well as "sense" directly, without the consciousness of any visual imagery, and these feelings may be in no way impoverished or restricted. The sensibility which poets call imagination is a capacity for feeling, rather than for seeing, and is in no way related to the habit of thinking in a series of mental pictures. Habitual visualizers cannot conceive of feeling apart from any mental picture and we are commonly assured that "One of the first necessities is to visualize, to see clearly every picture as it is presented by the poet. Without visualizing the poet's words the reader in no sense has before him that which the poet had at the time of writing."[1]

Failure to apprehend the sensuous value of a poem may however arise from this cause when the poet, for some

[1] G. J. Jennings, *Metaphor in Poetry.*

purpose, specially requires the formation of a visual image, but more commonly it is due to the absence of an inner ear for music. There is a wide gulf between a reader who immediately perceives the form and movement of a poem and one who either ignores it or has to build it up by reading aloud with finger-counting, table-tapping, etc.

Thirdly there is a danger of *irrelevant associations* and *stock responses*. Poems are not meant to recall personal memories and familiar emotional attitudes although they may make use of them. It would be easy to prepare a list of words, subjects and rhythms calculated to arouse these facile stock responses, and with this material proceed to the manufacture of " poetry with a nation-wide appeal " though some natural vulgarity or self-complacency may be essential to complete success. Here we have the root of much badness, as well in writing as in reading. Stock responses being, by their very nature, easy must hinder the development of more subtle and more appropriate responses, and poetry which uses them will leave the reader as muddled in his thought and his emotional relationships as he was before. For good poetry has this effect : it makes its reader more adequately adapted to his environment ; it is reflected in his thought and conduct and is, in fact, an instrument of biological progress. But this is not to say that the increase in efficiency, the psychological economy, is directly measurable. There is only one criterion, the reader's judgment : he feels that the trouble involved in apprehending the good poem was " worth while."

Sentimentality and *Inhibition* (or " Hardness of Heart ") give rise to similar difficulties. The former quality in a reader may be defined as excessive or excessively facile response : inhibition is the converse and is often a reaction from extreme sentimentality.

Whatever its cause, the fact that so many readers are afraid of free expansive emotion, even when the situation warrants it, is important. . . . It produces shallowness and trivial complexity in their response. And it leaves those " sentimental " overgrowths that escape the taboo too free a field for their semi-surreptitious existence. The only safe cure for a mawkish attachment to an illusory childhood

heaven, for example, is to take the distorted sentiment and work it into close and living relation with some scene concretely and truthfully realized, which may act as a standard of reality and awaken the dream-infected object of the sentiment into actuality. This is the treatment by expansion and *Piano*[1] may stand as an example of how it may be done. The other, more practised, form of treatment which we apply to sentimentalists—treatment through sneers, through "realism," through caustics, the attempt by various means not to enlarge the canalized response, but to destroy it or dry it up—is ineffective, and may only lead to increased impoverishment. . . . The sentimentalist, in brief, is not distributing his interest widely enough, and is distributing it in too few forms.

That is an admirable example of the application of psychology to criticism (and education), but in the same chapter Mr. Richards is in some little difficulty for it is impossible to find an objective measure of the "correct" response. This is part of his larger difficulty outlined above: the concept of "beauty" is replaced by a "movement towards self-completion" but this movement or adjustment cannot be defined but is detected only as a feeling, *i.e.*, as "beauty." The difficulty was somewhat glossed over in the *Principles of Literary Criticism*, but is now clearly acknowledged. It is in fact, no blemish, for the world of feelings is not in last resort subject to rational analysis. It will be sufficient if the theory removes those ambiguities and vagueness which have caused so many fruitless wrangles. A response is known to be sentimental if, on mastering our hindrances, we pass beyond it to something which we feel to be more valuable.

A surprising number of readers were limited in their appreciation by the very thing which ought to help them most—their literary education. Having acquired definite *preconceptions* about the function and technique of poetry, they use them as touchstones. There is no logical reason why a poem should obey any of the rules of rhyme or prosody except in so far as that obedience contributes to the desired effect, but clearly departure from those rules, if accidental or unwilling, most unlikely to enhance the value of the poem. It is the critic's duty to draw attention

[1] From *Collected Poems*, 1928, by D. H. Lawrence (Secker).

to technique and meaning, and neither to condemn nor praise. To drag in ethical judgments is equally irrelevant. "This poem contains a message of sweetness and purity, therefore it is good,"—such expressions confuse intention and effect, though if the poem is beautiful for the reader, *i.e.*, resolves some emotional conflict and establishes some inner harmony, it will render him more fit for life and in that sense the actions to which it gives rise are likely to be "good." On the other hand, a direct incitement to good deeds may be a complete frost. In poetry there is no short cut to judgment, no arbitrary rule or test of excellence, except that harmonizing influence. Nor is there any subject, any experience however pitiful or loathsome, which cannot by the skilful poet be woven into that essential harmony. It requires courage and independence to *read* a poem and judge it from within without the use of prejudice or preconception.

One of the last props of the timid, the notion that the acceptance of a poem implies complete acceptance of its literal doctrine, is removed by Mr. Richards by drawing a distinction between an intellectual belief which is a part of a logical system, and an emotional belief which we can hold as long as the logical context of our ideas is not in question, and is a step towards fulfilment of some need, conscious or unconscious, which is not barred by any other need more active at the moment.

This distinction does not seem very convincing and it may be useful to suggest here that the difficulty is again one of language. The statement which one believes emotionally, not intellectually, is one in which words are used in all their richness and significance *minus* their modern, restricted "literal" sense.

> Lord when the wise men came from farr
> Ledd to thy cradle by a starr,
> Then did the shepheards too rejoyce,
> Instructed by the Angell's voyce,
> Blest were the wisemen in their skill,
> And shepheards in their harmelesse will.

An atheist could deny the truth of any literal paraphrase

of these lines of Godolphin and yet believe something of which the words were symbols.

The statement, so interpreted is possible in the same sense as any other, though admittedly poetry is the only logic of words when they are used with such a meaning. Mr. Richards has, however, promised us a further study of the nature of belief. Using his language, then, we may say: emotional belief accompanied by intellectual disbelief need imply no insincerity; the psychological adjustments promoted by poetry, even the "doctrinal" poetry of Dante, Donne or Milton may be essential to civilized man even though we do not accept the whole of the original meaning of the poet. Indeed this theory which Mr. Sturge Moore, for example, opposes because it describes the appreciation of beauty in psychological terms, makes that appreciation no mere luxury, no "end in itself," but something as necessary as is bread.

Mr. Sturge Moore (in a book most beautifully bound and printed[1]) announces dogmatically: "beauty is no more subjective than light." Virtually he asserts: "The metric (scientific) aspects of light are not subjective." Agreed. "Therefore the æsthetic aspects of light (colour, beauty) are not subjective." *Non sequitur.*

Mr. Sturge Moore himself feels that this argument is shaky and refers the reader to Professor G. E. Moore's *Philosophic Studies.* Now Professor Moore poses as the philosopher of commonsense and commonsense is dangerous. A belief is commonsense when it is useful for ordinary purposes, *i.e.*, when it involves no contradictions *provided it is not pressed too far.* But this utilitarianism cannot be Mr. Moore's criterion of truth; he himself observes:

> "Multitudes now act as though expediency were the sole value, scholars even found philosophical theories on that; but historic developments—and such scholars recognize nothing else—can only acquire significance from the application of these values."—(Virtue, Beauty, Truth.)

This is commonsense, but the problem is oversimplified; the book is full of suggestive remarks but one can never

[1] *Armour for Aphrodite* (Grant Richards & Humphrey Toulmin. 8s. 6d.).

be sure that they are mutually consistent, for Mr. Moore, unlike his namesake, does not build a system. He even tries to justify his inconsistencies :

> We recognize the validity of the contradictory descriptions ; that of the child who thinks a bough villainously slashed his face, and that of the scientist who forms a clear image of the mechanism of its recoil. Because they are proper to diverse levels of knowledge we allow both some truth.

That is true enough, but if a writer proposes to wander at random from the magical to the scientific world he must be read with the utmost caution. Subject to this restriction we find the book full of acute perceptions. Talking of Truth and Beauty, for example, he says : " It is generally forgotten that The Urn speaks, not Keats." His main thesis is neatly summarized : " Taste must enjoy, it need not understand, so must Aphrodite far rather strip than arm."

That Mr. Moore " meant well " I do not doubt, but such attempted epigrams read rather curiously after a discussion of " understanding," and we shall be grateful to Mr. Richards if his foolproof terminology rescues critics from the risk of using words like " taste " and " beauty " in half-a-dozen senses in one chapter. In fact, Mr. Moore's language, being more vague, seems easier than Mr. Richards' tart precision, yet proves to be more difficult upon examination.

" I merely offer tests for tackle so that æsthetic experience may be achieved and ingenious intellectual counterfeits of it avoided." Certainly intellectual *judgments* based on critical preconceptions hinder all appreciation. But what are these " counterfeits of experience " ? Either you have some experience or none. There is, as Mr. Barfield says, " a certain half spurious element in the appreciation of poetry, with which everyone will be familiar, when one takes delight, not only in what is said and in the way it is said, but in a sense of difficulties overcome—of an obstreperous medium having been masterfully overcome. It is a kind of architectural pleasure. . . . It strikes us, for instance,

in Milton and the Metaphysicals." Surely Mr. Moore is not rejecting this intellectual pleasure? Perhaps he is trying to say that this is only a part of the full experience.

But Mr. Moore can be more wise and clear than this; there is much in his book to widen and to deepen our appreciation of good art; and as he says, even the exponents of theories which seem to us one-sided or distorted may yet enlighten us and show us beauties we had hitherto neglected. "Our taste grows as we act on it and recognize our mistakes, or go one better than our successes. It is essentially a venture, an experiment. If we cling to what it is, we may stifle what it might be."

But even here there is a danger of unconscious hypocrisy; to foresee what we are likely to admire later is no appreciation; we must be scrupulously honest. And Mr. Moore is honest; in the last resort he would agree with Mr. Richards:

> When we have the poem in all its minute particulars as intimately and fully present to our minds as we can contrive then our acceptance or rejection of it must be *direct*. There comes a point in all criticism where a sheer choice has to be made without the support of any arguments, principles, or general rules. All that arguments and principles can do is to protect us from irrelevancies, red-herrings and disturbing preconceptions. . . . They may preserve us from bad arguments, but they cannot supply good ones.

And if we want an example of wise guidance let us turn to a newly-published essay by the Poet Laureate[1]:

> If my criticism should seem sometimes harsh, that is, I believe, due to its being in plain terms, a manner which I prefer; because by obliging the writer to say definitely what he means, it makes his mistakes easy to point out, and in this way the true business of criticism may be advanced; nor do I know that, in work of this sort, criticism has any better function than to discriminate between the faults and merits of the best art; for it commonly happens, when any great artist comes to be generally admired, that his faults, being graced by his excellencies, are confounded with them in the popular judgment, and being easy of imitation, are points of his work which are most liable to be copied.

[1] Collected Essays, Papers, etc., of Robert Bridges. IV. *A Critical Introduction to Keats* (Oxford: University Press. London: Humphrey Milford. 2s. 6d. net)

MICHAEL ROBERTS.

COLOGNE

ABOVE the little world of men your walls
Aspire to God and point the way on high.
When sun at noontide floods the earth and falls
Upon you, men must worship, deify
Your splendour, till they turn in awe to Him,
The Master Architect. Your majesty
Enthrals at noon. But as the heavens grow dim,
A softer glow envelops tranquilly
Your sides. A hush draws over now that blends
The universe into a prayer. The light
Of stars, the peace of all the sky, descends
Upon you when the beauty of the night,
Enfolding you in purple dreams, again
Unfolds the mystery of God to men!

FREDERICK H. ADLER.

CHARTRES

THROUGH dimness distantly drops jewelled light,
Gleaming from a rose window, filters deep
Into blue stillness, slants across the steep
Thrust of a transept pillar into night
Illumining its sheer and silver flight
That vanishes aloft in mighty sweep;
While these cool vaults below for ever keep
Refuge against disaster's darker might.

A bell's sound slowly sinks through space distilled,
Swinging in echoes of old times left far
In motion of the irreversible years.
And all the nave with vibrant grace is filled,
That man against the failing of his star
Here soared to hush the murmurs of his fears.

W. MANN FINCKE.

S. MARK'S REVISITED

I. The Piazza

LET me stand here where first I saw of old
This triple wonder—the supreme surprise,
However often it may greet the eyes
Of sated travellers ; see the sunlit gold
Beneath the encrusted arches like a mould
Of dashing waves ; fancy the grey dome's rise
From their poised flight, but to less heavenly skies—
All lovelier than all poets ever told.

How feminine she is, this Orient Queen !—
Trailing her skirts of marbled lace along
Beside the Piazzetta, while the Tower,
Like Strength defending Beauty, stands serene.
'Tis the world's dream, this dream of Joy and Power,
Caught in the permanence of Art and Song.

II. The Interior

WHAT refuge in this temple ! What a boon !—
So quiet one can almost hear the tide,
Its only crypt, its foe so long defied.
In the brown shade that makes a dusk of noon,
Across the tesselated floor the shoon
Of the hushed pilgrims move with ghostly glide.
The mystery of ages seems to hide
In the dark aisles where candles gleam and swoon.

Not here by colour doth the spirit rise :
No jewelled window breaks th' harmonious plan,
No blazoned painting mars the gentle gold ;
Yet 'tis a sermon spoken to the eyes.
Here might a pagan find the God of old
Through Art, that is the Voice Divine in Men.

ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON.

SAINT MARY OF THE FLOWERS

(FLORENCE)

MORE like a lily than a marble tower
Famed Giotto's campanile stands beside
The great cathedral. When the warm noontide
Pours sunshine in a reckless golden shower
On rich facade and matchless dome, the hour
Is splendor's own. Here stands the crowning pride
Of Florentines who lived and loved and died
And left the world bright beauty for a dower.

The vast interior is dim and chill.
A lonely bat flies through the twilight space.
Ah, listen, while the candles flicker low—
Savonarola's voice seems calling still;
Savonarola dominates the place
Though hanged and burned long centuries ago.

B. Y. WILLIAMS.

ST. NAZAIRE

ABOVE the river valley rising high
Upon the ramparts of old Carcassonne
Stands the cathedral, o'er which sun has shone,
Rain fallen, and the Mistral chill swept by
For centuries, a bulwark to defy
The power of sin as each begrimed donjon
Defied man's power through all the ages gone—
A bulwark ever pointing to the sky.

From strength the portal leads to peace supreme
The nave. Each column tall, each rounded arch
Assurance gives that all below is dream
Through which the way of Faith must upward march;
While through the windowed rose the soul may see
The broken lights of glories that shall be!

JANE C. CROWELL.

THE CATHEDRAL *

(St. Patrick's, New York City)

AS lonely crags that shield a sea-bird's brood
Amid the tempest towering, calm, abide,
So rests above the pageant's surging tide
The peace of thy majestic solitude.
Wave free her flag whose spirit unsubdued
Gave freedom's birth to souls that else had died:
To-day her children's song has satisfied
For all the bitter pangs of motherhood.

Far heavenward thy sister spires are crowned
By crosses, that sadden, solace, and uplift
The hearts earth's sinful sorrows overwhelm
Nor land nor church can human yearning bound—
The calm of beauty is thy noblest gift. . . .
Is prophecy of love's eternal realm.

* In time of National Celebration.

S. L. WHITCOMB.

MILAN CATHEDRAL

SERENE and delicate as if the frost,
Finding a strain of music in its power,
Should crystallize that mystery in a tower,
A pinnacle, a spire with rapture tossed
Against the sky; as if a forest crossed
By magic felt its lacery in an hour
Stiffen to stone, each tree and lifted flower
Preserved for ever (though for ever lost)
In loveliest filigree. Yet some man
With calculation exquisitely just
Made every slender spire within his plan
Give pressure meet to offset every thrust,
Stress for each strain; some master artisan
Knew what frail dreams may thwart destruction's dust.

ELIZABETH F. GRIFFIN.

SORDELLO: THE POET OF A POET.

A CRAVING for speed in the air, speed on the roads, and the trail of death behind both: speed spreading to invade art, especially Poetry, with, it may be, intellectual death also following on! And, urged by this desire for accelerated sensations, the modern reader demands the food of the intellect to be compressed into such a concentrated form as may be absorbed in a minimum of time. The modern "poet" might write of Sordello thus:

> Sordello, king of verse,
> Barbarossa Emperor,
> Factions warring,
> Italia torn
> And bleeding.
> Sordello thwarted;
> Lover of Cunizza,
> His birth a mystery,
> His body failing,
> He dies protesting.

"Now," cries a reader, "I know all about Sordello." But Browning set himself, he says, to dissect "the development of a soul, little else is worth study." There is a mine of mental wealth in Browning's poem, and this article merely aims at concisely representing the scenes and the actors to clear the way for each individual reader to study more easily the developments of Sordello's soul for himself: this must, of necessity, be a personal matter, "for who knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him?"

Firstly then, it must be conceded that Browning had so inexhaustibly studied the times and the persons of his poem's period that he is apt to confuse anyone of lesser research by writing familiarly of characters but little known. In this he resembles some chance acquaintance who talks to us of his relations by pet names, and we do not know whether those appellations apply to men, women, or animals.

The period of the poem was when "The second Friedrich wore the purple, and the third Honorius filled the holy chair." This second Friedrich was the grandson of

Friedrich, or, as we better know him, Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor; the red-bearded monarch, who brought his German soldiers into Italy and rased Milan to the ground. Edward Hutton, in his entrancing book, *Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini*, gives a thumb-nail sketch of those troubled days and warring factions which continued until Sordello's time

> ——"*when Frederic Barbarossa and the Pope made treaty together at Constance in* 1183, *then the cities of Italy were divided in their allegiance, and every man, according to his pleasure, or profit, was a partisan either of the Empire or the Pope, but none stood for Italy.— Then fell the Republics of my country.*"

The treaty between Pope Alexander and Frederick Barbarossa was made in 1177, not 1183, and the meeting of these potentates took place at Venice, not Constance; but, except for these details the picture is a true one of Italy, divided against herself.

We are shown, then, a confused arena of fortified towns all at daggers drawn with one another and continually changing sides; at a Pope sometimes acknowledged, oftentimes defied, also the ghastly comedy of two Popes at the same time: and, as Emperor, a German who claimed to dominate all: and Emperor, Pope, dukes, lords, and warriors, all and each out for wealth and power, and entirely unscrupulous as to the means used to gain either. Poison, dagger, treachery or torture, any and all came alike to them.

Browning shows us Verona, that fair city whose very name is a poem. On an autumn evening in Verona the townsfolk are stirred by disquieting news—

> "—for, be it understood,
> Envoys apprised Verona that her prince,
> Count Richard of Saint Boniface, joined since
> A year with Azzo, Este's Lord, to thrust
> Taurello Salinguerra—from his seat Ferrara."

This Count Richard, or Rizzardo de San Bonifazio, was chief magistrate of Verona; he was married to Cunizza, and Sordello was Cunizza's lover. The varying accounts

of this fair Cunizza are difficult to unravel. According to some account she was a wanton who was murdered by her brother, Ezzelino II; others say she outlived her family and passed her closing years in prayer and charities, and there exists a document drawn up by her in which she frees all her serfs to obtain salvation for her soul and the souls of her infamous brother and father, Ezzelino the first and second, and her hideously murdered uncle, Alberic. This Cunizza is the Palma of Browning's *Sordello*: and Browning rather quaintly writes: "Palma, Dante spoke with in the clear amorous silence of the swooning sphere, Cunizza as he calls her"—as that was her name naturally Dante uses it! She had two sisters called Palma; it may be Browning found that name more suited to his verse. The story of her late penitence must be the more correct one because Dante places her in Paradisio, and his stern morality would hardly have permitted him to put an unrepentant wanton into the light of that swooning sphere. Her brother Ezzelino and her father are in the Inferno, Sordello himself in Purgatorio. Browning says, "Never ask of Palma more"; he must have accepted the tradition that she was murdered by her brother.

Dealing then, with these rumours and troubles, Browning gives us men speaking familiarly of the many lords and tyrants. One cries, "Ecelin, they say, Dozes now at Oliero." This is Ezzelino the first, a man whose abnormal cruelties have become a matter of tradition. He had gone in wild remorse to Oliero's monastery, but his son, Ezzelino, carried on the hideous crimes of his father. The stage is becoming clear: we have Verona, with the Count Rizzardo de San Bonifazio, the chief Magistrate, old Ezzelino at Oliero, and Cunizza (or Palma) his daughter, a slip of a girl, betrothed to Rizzardo; Azzo of Este, lord of Ferrara, and another figure, Taurello Salinguerra, who had made himself lord of Ferrara in Azzo's despite. "Such," writes Browning, "the time's aspect and peculiar woe," and he adds that you may read it for yourself in old chronicles, "albeit the worm, our busy brother," has eaten away some words. With this enviable acquaintance with worm-eaten

records he continues,

> " When the new Hohenstauffen dropped the mask,
> —Forswore crusading, had no mind to leave
> Saint Peter's proxy leisure to retrieve
> Losses to Otho and to Barbaross,
> Or make the Alps less easy to recross ;
> And, thus confirming Pope Honorius' fear,
> Was excommunicate that very year."

This " new Hohenstauffen " was Frederick the second, who refused to go on the crusade as his grandfather, Barbarossa, had done. The elder Frederick was still venerated as a great personality throughout the Lombardy communes, so that when the inhabitants of Verona hear that the grandson has refused the Pope's demand to go crusading, they cry, " The triple-bearded Teuton come to life." The triple beard is a reference to a portrait of Barbarossa, in which his red beard is divided into three strands ; his crusade involved his death, and his bones were left on a lonely mountain far from his native land.

Then, still chatting, Browning says,

> " Conrad descries no fitter, rear or van,
> Than Ecelo."

Now Conrad was Emperor nearly two hundred years before this story, and Ecelo the sire of the Ezzelinos ; these intimate references to past history are confusing to any reader not conversant with the times.

We must impress on our minds the actors. Browning describes Ezzelino the first as " pinched and white," whereas Taurello Salinguerra was a very different being, " Men understood Living was pleasant to him " ; we have a cheery picture of him in " his careless surcoat," and glancing some missive o'er,

> " Propped on his truncheon in the public way,
> While his lord lifted writhen hands to pray,
> Lost at Oliero's convent."

Then there is Azzo, lord of Ferrara, swearing dreadful vengeance on pleasant Salinguerra, a vengeance the unhappy town was made to suffer ; and the second Ezzelino,

plotting, plotting his infernal schemes; and the Emperor and the Pope keenly watching—not over the welfare of the people, never that—but for the opportunity of grasping more power and greater wealth. And into this seething pot of treachery, cruelty, and shameless greed, was Sordello's lot flung.

On this same autumn evening in Verona, while her twenty-four chief citizens are discussing the situation, Browning opens a door and shows us a man deep in musing by a dying lamp flame, and a woman stands beside him—

> " Her wise
> And lulling words are yet about the room,
> Her presence wholly poured upon the gloom
> Down even to her vesture's creeping stir."

Browning sees in pictures, and this poem abounds in pictures so vivid that even the colour is there; this dying lamp flame—this unstirring man—this woman whose mere presence is reflected on the gloom—and the soft stir of her long lovely robes—you see them, and in seeing them the foreboding shadow of the doom of frustration fills the gloom. It is this shadowed man whom Browning hails as " Sordello," " Thy forerunner, Florentine," and he calls upon Dante to forgive him that he brings a less august name from the past poets: for Dante was " Plucker of amaranths grown beneath God's eye In gracious twilights where his chosen lie." In less gracious twilights Dante places Sordello—in the *Purgatorio* Sordello is the wan spectre that leaps to embrace Virgil; and it is noteworthy that Dante gives to Sordello longer speeches than to almost any of the spirits, which may account for Browning's way of giving us the somewhat inordinately long tirades of his Sordello.

This picture of him by the dying lamp flame belongs to his later years, when he was grown to manhood and Palma wedded to Count Rizzardo. Browning then, taking on the part of an Italian of that time, leads us to the Mantua territory—" In Mantua territory half is slough—even Mincio chokes with sand the summer through: but 'tis morass In winter up to Mantua walls." Here there is one

spot reclaimed—Goito, " just a castle built amid A few low mountains." The vivid description of the interior of this lone, sinister castle should not be lost :

> " Pass within.
> A maze of corridors contrived for sin,
> Dusk winding stairs, dim galleries got past
> You gain the inmost chambers, gain at last
> A maple-panelled room : that haze which seems
> Floating about the panel, if there gleams
> A sunbeam over it, will turn to gold . . . "
>
> " But quick
> To the main wonder, now. A vault, see ; thick
> Black shade about the ceiling, though fine slits
> Across the buttress suffer light by fits
> Upon a marvel in the midst. Nay, stoop—
> A dullish, grey-streaked cumbrous font, a group
> Round it——"

This group is of Caryatides, " noiseless girls " " penanced for ever," and here the boy Sordello comes every eve, as if in his loneliness he sought out the loneliness embodied in stone. This huge font plays its part in the story. This " slender boy in a loose page's dress " watches in summer " thievish birds at work," and in the winter, whilst " sullen storms rage," he holds a torch up to see the figures on the arras : always alone. His portrait is given—" the delicate nostril swerving wide and fine, A sharp and restless lip—a calm brow," and " a soul fit to receive Delight at every sense." Such is Sordello. One feels a sensation of anger that readers, such as Carlyle and Tennyson, could declare that they did not perceive whether Sordello was a man or a town. Then this lad, in his solitary wanderings round the castle, comes suddenly upon Adelaide, the second Ezzelino's wife, " bent double o'er a scroll, one maiden at her knees." At his intrusion " Started the meagre Tuscan up—her eyes, The maiden's, also, bluer with surprise." This maiden is Palma (or Cunizza).

Now, in addition to the beautiful pictures that Browning draws, there are many lovely and familiar lines which can only be referred to, such as—" day by day new pollen on

the lily petal grows, and still more labyrinthine buds the rose." But the chief point, for our present purpose, is, that, so far, the poem is clearness itself, and "who will, may hear Sordello's story told." Then comes some four pages of Browning's contrasting the poet with the ordinary man; and, as narrator, arguing with one Naddo, a somewhat comic follower and henchman of the Court poet, Eglamor. These asides only prove how deeply Browning had mentally lived in the scenes he portrays. Naddo, and Naddo's limited ideas, are as actual to Browning as the tiresome colonel at our club is to us.

"At first a simple sense of life Engrossed Sordello in his sleepy Paradise." Then the poet-soul in him awakes—"and though I must abide With dreams now, I may find a thorough vent For all myself, acquire an instrument For acting." Gradually the knowledge comes to him that he is a poet; he will sing, he will sing songs that will cause the "stricken multitude to hearken;" he will become a human Apollo. And through all his dreams sat Palma, her "tresses curled into a sumptuous swell of gold and wound about her like a glory."

Space, alas, will not allow of more than a sketch of Book 2. The gist of it is that Sordello, now a young man, goes to see the betrothal of his dream-maiden to Count Rizzardo. There the Court Poet, Eglamor, sings, and at the close Sordello steps forth and gives the assembled nobles his own song, his poem made in the silences of Goito. All the crowd acclaim him, and Palma steps down to throw her scarf, warm from her neck, about his shoulders, naming him her Court Poet from henceforth. Eglamor steals away and dies, apparently of anger and spite—at least, so say the common folk. Sordello swoons, and when he recovers he finds himself back at Goito. "He lay Beside the Carian group reserved and still," this group of stone maidens supporting the Great Font.

> "The Body, the Machine for acting Will,
> Had been at the commencement proved unfit;
> ——was the Will Itself
> In fault?"

After this agonising thought he says to himself, "I shall be king again," and he throws his crown as poet into the font, but keeps the precious scarf.

> "Next day, no poet. Wherefore?' asked
> Taurello, when the dance of Jongleurs, masked
> As devils, ended; 'don't a song come next?'
> The master of the pageant looked perplexed
> Till Naddo's whisper came to his relief.
> 'His Highness knew what poets were; in brief,
> Had not the techy race prescriptive right
> To peevishness, caprice?'"

So Naddo's excuses ended. The easy-natured Taurello smiled assent,

> Settled his portly person, smoothed his chin,
> And nodded that the bull-bait might begin.

Book 3 shows Sordello at Goito—

> Braid moonfern now with mystic trifoly
> Because once more Goito gets, once more,
> Sordello to itself.
> "So the stain
> O' the world forsakes Sordello, with its pain,
> Its pleasure."

Browning gives here the many doubts and sorrows of the poet's soul, "Had he failed?" Could the step once slipped ever be regained? Was the Court circle with all its rout of wickedness for him? Many and deeply interesting are the crowding thoughts and misgivings of the poet, and the touches of Browning's intimate grasp of Nature's lovely effects in flower, sky, tree and crag, make it well worth the reading. But to sum up. To Sordello in the silences of Goito comes Naddo; he urges—always from a lower level of spirit—that Sordello return to Verona; to Verona, therefore, goes Sordello, and that brings us to where the whole poem started,

> "I' the palace, each by each,
> Sordello sat and Palma: little speech
> At first in that dim closet, face with face
> (Despite the tumult in the market-place)
> Exchanging quick low laughters;

—But for the most part their two histories
Ran best thro' the locked fingers and linked arms."

Again these two meet, and Palma urges Sordello to action. She suggests that she and he, disguised in some gay weeds, may reach Ferrara before the arbiters arrive—

" —let Taurello's noble accents teach
The rest."

Palma hints at some secret that the wicked Adelaide let fall when she lay dying in Palma's arms. The rest of the book is taken up with further musings, and a glance at " John, the Beloved," at Patmos.

Book 4 opens, " Meantime Ferrara lay in rueful case " ; and there follows some terrific pictures of the horrors her " pair of suitors " had inflicted on the citizens. Then Browning leads us through Ferrara to see the marbles and the rare trees and shrubs that Taurello had brought here to beautify the city for his bride, Retrude—this Retrude whom Taurello believed had been killed in some fray in which Adelaide was saved. And here among the ruins comes Sordello. He is sorely perplexed, torn by his love of his country and his yearning to save her and his poetic destiny. He comes forth " older by years Than at his entry." He recollects what strange modes there have been of serving man, " Arbalist, catapult, brake, manganel, and more." And he cries, " Let all be solved at once ! Confront Taurello." And at last he did confront him.

Evidently Sordello is yet more staggered and unhappy from that interview, and " like some fresh mutilated brute " he goes through the town. Someone demands a song— " Here, minstrel, drive bad thoughts away ! Sing ! " and Sordello sings, the crowd cry, " A song of Eglamor's," but others say, " Our Sordello's rather," and wearily and with no touch of pride or joy, he says, " I made that." Then Palma, disguised among the city folk, puts out her hand and leads him away. She leads him to Taurello Salinguerra, and there follows a delightful picture of that warrior, who looked a youth in spite of his sixty years, " so quick And graceful turned the head on the broad chest," his glossy hair " above a brow thus kept calm," and gazing at Sor-

dello " a stammering awkward man." The story is broken off to recount the plots, fights and perpetual quarrels that rent Lombardy, also Taurello makes a long soliloquy over his life. Later, beside a watch fire, Sordello appeals to Palma,

> " 'Tis your cause :
> " What makes a Ghibelin ? There should be laws—
> (Remember how my youth escaped ! I trust
> To you for manhood, Palma ? Tell me just
> As any child) there must be laws at work
> Explaining this. Assure me good may lurk
> Under the bad——"

You perceive the soul of the poet overwhelmed with the stark horrors round him : but Palma, intent on her " cause," tells him she has a secret that will weigh with Taurello.

A bystander then demands a ballad, and proposes Rome as a subject : the thought of Rome starts all Sordello's misgivings again.

Book 5, Sordello sits upon the terrace, idly plucking powdery aloe cusps, and musing in the bitterness of his heart—" things proved beautiful could they be done, Sordello cannot do." Then there comes to him a low voice—

> " Sordello, wake ! God has conceded two sights to a man—
> One, of men's whole work, time's completed plan,
> The other, of the minute's work, man's first
> Step to the plan's completeness——"

This is Palma's voice, she speaks (I regret to say) for six and a half pages. " Since talking is your trade," she says (and Browning's eye must have twinkled at this), " There's Salinguerra left you to persuade." Up leaped Sordello and proceeded calm to the appointed presence. Salinguerra turns his large head and bids Palma's minstrel, " you with so much to say," speak. To be quite honest, they all have far too much to say. The drift of Sordello's words is a reproach against Taurello and the bitter confession that he is forced to own that the elder man is better fitted to help a sorry world than he—Sordello, though he be " ordained its champion from eternity " ; he continues for a very long time, and Browning inserts one delightful touch—the chief, Taurello, listening to this young man, who has so

much to say, "Immeasurably yawned," and Palma cries, "My poor Sordello! what may we extort by this, I wonder." Taurello throws a badge about Sordello's shoulders, calls him Romano's Head and bids him espouse Palma. Browning must have chosen to ignore the historical fact that Palma was already wedded to Count San Bonifazio. She, in her turn, discloses to Taurello that Sordello is his own son, for that Retrude had not been killed in the affray, but carried into Goito Castle, had died there, and the babe laid in the Font. Adelaide, Palma's stepmother, had hidden the babe, no doubt to use it as a pawn in the involved plots of the Ezzelinos, the Azzos, and Salinguerra himself. At this revelation the chief's arms were locked across his heart, till at last Palma cries, "Embrace him, madman." He did not embrace Sordello, but he laid Sordello's hand on his own eyes, mouth, forehead; then he signed that both should forbear him. And to hide an emotion he will not show, he recounts what he and this new-found son can perform, and he enumerates his friends and his foes; Sordello sees only further destruction, more death, more despair, and no end such as he, a poet, looks for. In trouble of mind and body he leaves them.

Book 6 deals almost entirely with these thronging thoughts of Sordello. How serve the People? What is best or worst? Where does he stand, who now is no longer Apollo nor a fighter as is his father? This Sordello, whose soul winged its flight in a clearer ether than the souls of other men; who saw the many facets of good and evil and therefore could not see a task and do it or leave it; "What has Sordello found?" In the silence he hears approaching footsteps, "Quick, What has Sordello found?" This may imply that the frustrated poet found some weapon to his hand for when Palma and Taurello reach the threshold, dash the veil aside—"and you divine who sat there dead, under his foot the badge": and a triumph lingering in the wide eyes.

> "Alas, my friend, alas, Sordello, whom
> Anon they laid within that old font-tomb,
> And yet again, alas."

The story of Sordello is told. It is the story of a poet's heart broken by the unfulfilment of its high endeavour.

The real facts are not so fine, I fear. Sordello was banished and lived many years after Taurello had been driven out of Ferrara and sent to Venice. But details are of little consequence when the whole picture is the great canvas of the tragedy of a lofty spirit broken and worn out.

In addition to the vivid, glowing, separate pictures Browning gives and the many lovely lines, there is this to be noted; Browning wrote Sordello in 1839. Fitzgerald began to study Persian in 1850 or 1851. In *Sordello* Browning writes of the spot where Alberic, the last of Ezzelino's family, perished so terribly—

> "Ecelin perished: and I think grass grew
> Never so pleasant as in Valley Rú."

Again, he says,

> "O 'twere too absurd to slight
> For the hereafter the to-day's delight."

The resemblance is astonishingly alike between the lines of these most dis-simular poets.

If this outline may serve so to introduce the actors in Browning's great work that readers will take it up for themselves, the reward that they will find will be all that I desire: it is a great work; we neglect it at our own loss.

And at the last a child barefoot and rosy, sings a line of one of Sordello's poems, but cannot recall the whole—

> "And thus bereft,
> Sleep and forget, Sordello! In effect
> He sleeps, the feverish poet."

ARTHUR HOOD.

Poetry of To-day, No. 17, the first issue under Mr. Arthur J. G. Russell's associate editorship, contains the representative work of a galaxy of fifty POETRY REVIEWERS.

A GARDEN OF BRIGHT GHOSTS.[1]

The eaves of his house are covered with
rose-red blossoms;
The angle of his wall is hidden by
jade-green grass.

From *Tu Fu*, by FLORENCE AYSCOUGH.

ALL through life Tu Fu was a wanderer, on foot, on horseback, sailing along great rivers and wide waters; a little while at Court, a long while in exile; the guest of governors, of magistrates and retired scholars; a poet to whom home and wife and children meant a few sorrowful lines of parting, some rapturous chords of return.

> My lifelong I have found inspiration in lonely places;
> I care not how far my horse's hoofs must travel.

And now the genius of Mrs. Ayscough has revealed to us this garden, where he abides with the brilliant companions of his age, with Li Po, Kao Shih and Ts'ên Ts'an—the semblance of a tall handsome man of frail yet distinguished appearance and courtly manners.

Others, the writer of this review included, have attempted to paint him as we imagined him, set him upon his horse again, or present him, sails unfurled, drifting to the capital of his dreams. But Mrs. Ayscough is wiser than the rest, wiser than her gifted colleague, the late Amy Lowell, than Mrs. Underwood, than Mr. Arthur Waley, whose Oxford trousers are unescapable. "When we imagine we are depicting others," says Emile Hovelaque, "it is rather our own portrait we are painting." And translation, especially from the Chinese, is largely an effort of imagination and substitution. We are carried away by a host of literary prejudices about rhyme and rhythm and word-values; we fill up the gaps which must necessarily occur between the primitive symbols of an ancient tongue, and the result is at best a hybrid. By an act of self-sacrifice, by suppressing her literary self, Mrs. Ayscough has achieved nothing short of a revolution in the art of translating. She has gone to

[1] *Tu Fu*, Vol. I, A.D. 712-759, translated by Florence Ayscough. London: Jonathan Cape. Illustrated, 21s. net;
Tu Fu, translated by Edna Worthley Underwood and Chi Hwang Chu. Portland, Maine: The Mosher Press. Illustrated, £1 11s. 0d.

work with those who are revealing for us Ur of the Chaldees and the secret sepulchres of the Pharaohs. She has excavated through the clouded æons that lie between us and the golden age of T'ang, through layer after layer of commentary, and history embalmed with the spices of legend and romance. She is saturated in the period of her research and yet empty of prejudice and rule of reconstruction, of the things which belong to the whirling individualism of to-day. With her we learn the Taoist doctrine of the Vacuum which, as Okakura says, "is all potent because all containing. . . . One who could make of himself a vacuum into which others might enter would become master of all situations." Past the open windows of the senses, and in at the open door of the heart, spring will come a shy messenger, summer a radiant guest, autumn a beloved companion, and winter a venerable sage. So inevitably, silently, this Garden of Bright Ghosts with its changing moods and seasons has drifted in, like some fabled Isle of the Blest, to fill the void.

But, after all, Mrs. Ayscough is what Tu Fu would have given his eyes to be and never was—*Chin shih*, whose modern equivalent is surely D.Litt. And what is the good of being *Chin shih*, wearing the purple robe and yellow girdle, unless you can do for Chinese literature what the creative artist invariably fails to accomplish? Creator and revealer are two separate entities, rarely housed in one human soul. This book, revealing as it does a strange and lovely world, challenges, stirs, and stimulates the creative impulse. The rest is with ourselves. For we, the watchers of an old life-drama, whose rapture and pain, colour and tumult have sunk to the dimness and stillness of a shadow-show are also the singers of the past, neither copyists nor translators, but transmuting into music of our own these intimations of immortality from an alien race and clime. Alien yet kindred, since Tu Fu and his friends are none other than ourselves. Lafcadio Hearn, in a memorable passage,[1] has adjusted us back to the immortal Gods and

[1] In *Ghostly Japan*, p. 240.

the past that is both human and immortal as they:

> Somewhere it is said that human life is the music of the Gods,—that its sobs and laughter, its songs and shrieks and orisons, its outcries of delight and of despair, rise never to the hearing of the Immortals but as a perfect harmony. . . . And in one way we ourselves are as Gods,—since it is only the sum of the pains and the joys of past lives innumerable that makes for us, through memory organic, the ecstasy of music. All the gladness and the grief of dead generations come back to haunt us in countless forms of harmony and of melody. Even so,—a million years after we shall have ceased to view the sun,—will the gladness and the grief of our own lives pass with richer music into other hearts—there to bestir, for one mysterious moment, some deep and exquisite thrilling of voluptuous pain.

So ours are these "horizontal flutes" and "short flageolets" of the beautiful ladies from the pleasure-boats of Ch'ang An, City of "Eternal Peace." And as we handle the harpsichord of Tu Fu the thrill that passes through us is communicated to all the twelve strings. Yet even if we use the delicate finger-guards to pluck them, the lost touch of the Master will never return. At first, to the ear untuned to older melodies, the chords will sound strange, elusive, fantastic, as of a child thrumming its way through the twilight, groping for the unattainable harmonies. But when silence is broken, a curtain rises on a sudden fall of moonlight and a rustle of recognition. For who are these figures before us in silvered outline but ourselves—our older, younger selves. We do but wake:

> We wake after drinking wine: a light breeze blows through the room,
> And we listen to poems in the silent midnight.
> Shadows of wistaria tendrils hang on our grass-cloth robes,
> And the chilly moonlight is a confused mass of white.

Here the quavering rebellion of the chorus of Œdipus at Colonus,

> "That is the final lot of man, even old age, hateful, impotent, unsociable, friendless"

is never heard. They knew, these Chinese poets, how to grow old gracefully and face the glimmer of the unknown.

or Fthem white hair was the honourable insignia of age, and fullness of years the emblem of the Ancestor-Apparent:

> We well know, white hair is no affair of Spring,
> Still we will empty the fragrant wine-jar and dote on all things in their bourgeoning.

Age cannot riot or dissemble with spring without provoking April's mockery. But it can still lift a cup of mellow autumn wine and drink to the young immortal, to those whose swift, impetuous feet will blot out the traces of our own, the adventurers of Now and singers of Hereafter.

> Deep, deep in the purity of a Spring night we pour out wine;
> The lamp shines on fine rain, on flowers dropping from the eaves.

Mrs. Underwood has attempted two very different things in one book. Many of her poems are rendered, more or less freely, into English verse. As such they are the outcome of a gracious personality—the personality of Mrs. Underwood. Tu Fu is but remotely in the background of the picture. In his preface to *The Works of Li Po*, Mr. Obata has put the matter of verse translation in a Japanese nut-shell:

> "Mr. Cranmer-Byng is elegant but somewhat prolix. His two books, *A Lute of Jade* and *A Feast of Lanterns* have many gorgeous lines, *suffused, I fear, with a little too much of his own impassioned poetry.*"

The italics are ours and the fault is ours, but the lesson is also for others. The task of writing this "impassioned poetry" was indeed a delightful one. We revelled in every line and no doubt Mrs. Underwood in her less impassioned but more gracious way has done the same. But we must not imagine that, in the sheer enjoyment of dressing up, in assuming the silken robe of a Chinese poet, we are achieving anything more than a moonlit masquerade. Once in the carnival of a night we saw Mr. Philip Snowden dressed up in the panoply of a king with a crown of gold on his head. But surely not for one purple moment did Mr. Snowden dream that he was——! or, if he did, there is a saving precedent in Chuang Tzŭ, the philosopher who

dreamt he was a butterfly. The subject is altogether too delicate to pursue. There is, however, another Mrs. Underwood. In a foreword brimming over with true appreciation of beauty and its origins she tells us that—"Only selflessness could create these supreme things—this effortless excellence." And where she has attained selflessness, removed the useless encumbrance of verse-forms swept away the dust of Western prejudice she is entitled to full need of praise.

Here is a little picture that shines clear in every detail:

> At foot of the Temple, Spring River is so deep that it does not seem to flow.
> Around the waist of the mountain, balustrades that twist, wind up my grief.
> There are green cliffs, whistling wind, and clouds that are clean and fine.
> Red maples, ten thousand strong, blaze back the sun.
>
> In silence the little walled court shuts in the spring.
> Ducks bathe; storks flutter as evening comes slow and slow.
> The thirty-two skies seem to love to lie close to the vines,
> The night is so black it may dare to invade Heaven too.

This is only one chosen at random from many pictures of equal charm. By using her mind as a mirror the author is reflecting for us the dragon-gorges and gemlike waters, cloud palaces and golden haze of a world that was girdled long ago by a poet's dreams. Exactly one hundred years have passed since Sir John Davis suggested that:

> "As our gardens have already been indebted to China for a few choice flowers, who knows but our poetry may some day lie under a similar obligation."

That is the task of Mrs. Ayscough and of Mrs. Underwood no less.

For our part, while the aroma of remembrance still lingers around us, we would recall one sentence from Lafcadio Hearn, thrown like a strand of immortality linking life and death, and reaching out beyond our day:

Hearts of old moons will make the surface of future worlds.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

THE TRAVELLER

"TO Samarcand, to Samarcand,
Show me the road!" the Traveller cried.
"Show me the road to Samarcand!"
He called and would not be denied.
"For I will sail beyond the rock
That guards the Gate of the Middle Sea,
Beyond the Isles of Greece, and knock
Upon the Door of Eternity.
For I travel far and I go singing
Across the Earth to the wide World's end;
And still the words of my songs are ringing
The ears of those that call me friend.
But I must come to Samarcand,
The golden city of sand and sun,
To Samarcand, to Samarcand,
Beyond where the race of the stars is run.
For I travel singing along my road,
And carry little but fairy things,
And they are a light and easy load
And pass beyond, 'twixt my soul's wings."

PETER ANTHONY HUTTON.

AN OLD MAN

IN sixteen-hundred-and-five (Say, was that not
The year of "Lear," and the Gunpowder Plot?)
John Speede performed this map of Oxfordshire.

Three centuries ago . . . and yet behold,
Drowsing as still they drowse by stream and wold,
Woodstock and Burford, Thame and Dorchester,
And all the other little towns I know,
Nestling around their steeples and clock-towers
That still chime out benign and mellow hours.

Did other hearts, three centuries ago,
Feel the same home-sick longing that you stir
Within me now, O towns of Oxfordshire!

E. F. A. GEACH.

CHARLOTTE MEW

IT is a sad and embittering thing to write first-class poetry and yet to be generally unrecognised, during one's life-time, as a first-class poet. Charlotte Mary Mew, the woman poet who died in London last year after a life of poverty and suffering, was practically unknown outside her own small personal circle; yet in the opinion of the discerning, notably Thomas Hardy, she was one of the finest poets of modern times. It was through the combined efforts of Hardy, de la Mare and Masefield that she was granted a tardy Civil List pension of £75 a year; and among Hardy's papers after his death was found a poem of hers, copied by him from *The Sphere*. Reading it, we can easily understand why her work appealed to him so strongly; the principal characteristics of both poets are sincerity, depth of feeling, and a brooding sense of tragedy. The poem in question is *Fin de Fête* and might almost have been written by Hardy himself:—

" Sweetheart, for such a day
One mustn't grudge the score;
Here, then, it's all to pay,
It's Good-night at the door.

Good-night and good dreams to you,
Do you remember the picture-book thieves
Who left two children sleeping in a wood the long night through,
And how the birds came down and covered them with leaves?

So you and I should have slept,—But now,
Oh, what a lonely head!
With just the shadow of a waving bough
In the moonlight over your bed."

Charlotte Mew is not everybody's poet; she does not express commonplace emotions in facile language, neither does she yield an inch to conventional metres merely for the sake of being smooth and easy to read. She stands in a class by herself: lonely, austere but passionate, secretly frightened of the cruelty and harshness of life, yet bravely facing it for the most part. " Her temperament was keyed very low, and the tribulations and batterings of her personal life, including the poverty that dogged her all her days,

were probably responsible for the fact that many of her poems show an intense pre-occupation with death and disaster either physical or spiritual."

But was she any less keenly alive to beauty and happiness, when they came her way? She could write, for example, *In the Fields* :—

> "Lord, when I look at lovely things which pass,
> Under old trees the shadows of young leaves
> Dancing to please the wind along the grass,
> Or the gold stillness of the August sun on the
> August sheaves;
>
> Can I believe there is a heavenlier world than this?
> And if there is
> Will the strange heart of any everlasting thing
> Bring me these dreams that take my breath away?
> They come at evening with the home-flying rooks and the
> scent of hay,
> Over the fields. They come in Spring."

Penned all her life in the heart of Bloomsbury, except for occasional brief intervals, Charlotte Mew's intense and wistful love for Spring and trees and birds is the more pathetic, the more poignant. She wonders why

> "the tossed shadow of boughs in a great wind shaking
> Is such a lovely thing."

and she cannot sleep at nights in her lonely London bedroom, because

> "they are cutting down the great plane-trees at the end of the garden,
> And half the spring, for me, will have gone with them."

In much of her poetry there is a recurrent note of longing for escape from bricks and chimney-pots—symbols of her grey poverty-fettered life—to the simpler, freer life of the country. But she possessed a strong sense of duty, and she placed family claims before her own personal inclinations. Her mother's death, her own breakdown in health, and the long and painful illness of which her beloved sister died, were only three of the many trials which beset her; but she could gaze across the desert of London chimneys

with the " seeing " eyes of a true poet, to find some measure of comfort in the vision beyond.

She published surprisingly little (two slim books, *The Farmer's Bride* and *The Rambling Sailor* are her only contributions to English literature); but what she lacked in quantity she made up for in quality. She was an artist to her finger-tips—sensitive, highly-strung, acutely alive to beauty and ugliness.

But the vital question is, Will her work live? In the words of a fellow poet, John Freeman, " the sharpness and depth of her spirit are not matched by sharpness and weight of expression. Had she possessed the power of making speech all flashing ice or burning stars, compressed unto the last intensity, she might have startled us." And again: " Whatever issues from Charlotte Mew's poetry comes from the depths, and issues with difficulty. Verbal brilliancy, ingenuities of form, subtlety of rhythm—these she could not command."

Perhaps not; still, these after all are only the trimmings of poetry. Charlotte Mew, like Hardy, had the two absolute essentials—sincerity and depth. She was " no hasty and shallow being, easily moved from mirth to morbidity." Behind the starkly simple phrasing of *I so Liked Spring* the sympathetic reader will feel the dumb intolerable heartache of the suffering woman; a woman too proud, too inarticulate, too sensitively disciplined, to pour out her life's tragedy in spectacular words like " flashing ice or burning stars."

" I so liked Spring last year
Because you were here;—
The thrushes too—
Because it was these you so liked to hear—
I so liked you.

This year's a different thing,—
I'll not think of you.
But I'll like Spring because it is simply Spring
As the thrushes do."

MARY MAIR.

SEPTEMBER MOON.

THE marygolds like bright-haired choir boys
Sleep in their wide green stalls,
The sunflowers nod and sway and softly drowse
Unheeding descants of the bees,
Deep in their hearts, and shrill-voiced flies
Poised in the spires of golden-rod
And far—so far—away the anxious calls
Of crows are half-lost lullabies,
Not homilies to rouse
The labourer from his ease
To gather apples now
Upon the highest bough :

He lies unstirring, happy in the sun,
Nor thinks of this to do nor that undone,
But as the languor steals
Along his limbs, he feels,
As children do, the guardianship of God.

A. DORIS L. WILSON.

EYES OF MEN.

O LAUGHING, lusting eyes,
The hidden worth of hearts we scan
In you without disguise,
For God has placed on you a ban—
You may not utter lies :
Betrayers, of the soul of man,
O helpless, haunted eyes !

EYES OF WOMEN.

O LONELY, smiling eyes,
Bright as twin rain-drenched stars you gleam,
Soft, tear-dimmed, Eve-old, wise.
And in your depths a happy dream
Lurks, though you agonise—
For men, forgiving, you redeem :
O foolish, loving eyes !

K. O'NEILL-BAILEY.

NARCISSUS.

IN the twin depths of your dear eyes
My portrait set in sapphire lies :—
So, Sweet, those soft fring'd curtains raise
That veil the vision from my gaze,
Since I but seek, Narcissus-wise,
My own reflection in your eyes !

A. GORDON EDDISON.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XXV

A FRIEND brings to me a little book of John Kinston Fineran's, *Interludes in Chaos* (The Provincial Press, New Orleans, La.), and I find he thanks *Harper's Magazine* and the *Quarter* for permission to reprint, so he is on his way. "Finalities" follows, and then "Apologia."

Just as I pass, high gates of steel clang to;
When I have crossed a bridge, I see it fall;
Where I had joy, there men have built a wall,
And I must leave the old ways for the new.
No word said yesterday, to-day is true.
Of last year's ways, no memory at all
Returns to me, unless I chose to call,
And those I would remember so are few.

The sharp perfection of finalities
Entrances me. I would not take away
With me the thing I pass, no stop to seize
A little joy. No moment may I stay.
I am rewarded thus, in being free
From all that was, for all that is to be.

* * *

I know it does not matter if I seem
To all the world a fool because my hand
Has wrought no thing of worth; because I stand
When others march, and when they toil I dream;
Because I treasure more the smallest beam
Of sun or starlight than the high command
Of gods or nations; do not understand.
How things are greater, or a lesser gleam.

I shall confess myself a fool indeed,
And be as much a fool as I may be,
And hoard the light imprisoned in a song
Against the day of darkness and of need
That comes to others as it comes to me
When none may know me right, or prove me wrong.

In New York it is an event to hear from our South. We know that there is so much they do not have to learn from books about the beauty of nature. We are hoping that Mr. Fineran will enter our next contest.

Elizabeth Curtis, artist and poet, strikes a definite note in *Equinox* (Harold Vinal). There is a clean-cut analysis in her work, with a generous understanding of beauty thrown in. We will read "Electricity and Life":

Since we are magnets and respond to moon
And planets influence, we also need
The aggregated stimulus, the tune
Of other human batteries. We feed
And pray and sing together within wells
To concentrate our power, as ectoplasm
Must be enclosed and thrives when evening falls,
Sub-conscious force becoming weird phantasm.

When shall we understand vibrations, space?
Afraid to venture in an unknown field,
Solve mysteries, look truths thus face to face.
What secrets electricity might yield—
Communication with the dead again;
The spark magnetic from another brain.

The following quotations are from "September Night"—

The air is full of moisture, scent of phlox
And falling apples. Now above the hill
An orange moon hangs in the violet sky,
Ethereal shadows quiver on the path
Where slender poplars pierce the silver dusk.
The garden lies enclosed, remote from sound,
A drowsy fragrance muffles thought and speech,
As sheathed in mystery the soul gropes forth
Adventuring, beneath the fragrant weight
Of flower and fruit-laden atmosphere.

* * * *

This beating pulse would make me strangle you!—
Translated into terms of love, I'd say
Will you be mine for ever? but I know
It is the garden-magic, fragrance, night.

* * * *

"If I could stifle sound with one embrace
Then you should slowly suffocate, not I—
This sultry summer night is nature's snare,
Vibrating, powerful as life itself."

It is through Miss Curtis' interest in poetry and generosity that she is the donor of the new medal of the American Poetry Society. The design was made by Thomas Casileer Cole, and is beautiful—"A Winged Horse."

Mr. Frank Ernest Hill who, with Joseph Auslander, wrote *The Winged Horse*, which was reviewed in the Dynamics of American Poetry recently with deserved high compliment, signs a new book called

Stone Dust (Longmans Green). There are 84 pages, and many draw the eye. "Lover's Gold" follows:

What shall be done to hold a shining thing
Struck from hand touching hand, the shadow-slight
Brushing of lips and whispers in the night?
Hard-mined this lovers' gold, swift-perishing.
A song has sound remembering lips can sing,
Dancing comes back with being done again,
And chisel makes a form and brush a stain
For moods the soul gave moment's harbouring.

Yet this we cannot snare with sound or line.
As bright as meeting stars, as dark and warm
And vague as heart's ache, its radiant storm
Beats and is stilled and no new miracle
Of lovers' peace or fire can make it shine
From those dead midnights where it flamed and fell.

And quoting from "Snow Forest" we give the second stanza—

The wall of some high door
Clanged at your heels. All round
Beyond its white lies bound;
Silence alone is free!
Pause here awhile and you
Shall be of silence, too,
Merged with stone and tree
In the mould of a white floor.
You shall watch the lavender
Tree shadows, how they do not stir,
And how the unreaped leaves have carved their gold
Against the cold.

A Woman at Dusk and Other Poems by Arthur Stringer (Bobbs-Merrill Company) might escape from under hand at this desk. Since he is a Canadian by birth, educated at Toronto and Oxford, his part in American Dynamics could only be indirect. The book is delightful. *The London Times* says:—"The expression is always sound and choice; his blank verse is consistently dignified and musical; the thought is very beautiful. . . . The work of a fine gift, carefully cultivated."

We quote from "The Woman at Dusk," the poem that gives the title:—

One white hand droops across your knee; you stare
Off into space with shadowy eyes that seem
To watch a lone horizon dark with rain
And cities ruinous and seas forlorn
Of sun and movement.

Like a dead leaf stirs
That listless hand, and then grows still again,
And from your mouth's rose-misted petulance
A little sigh of weariness takes wing,
And round your chin, the soft and child-like chin
As delicate as dew, a ghostly smile
Hovers and then is gone.

We find "Oxford After Many Years" a beautiful appreciation opening :—

These are the dreaming towers, the ivied walls
I knew years ago.

ending with—

For here, afar from earth's unrest, afar
From all the clamorous wheels, there is no change,
No last surrender to beleaguering Time,
But mid soft-ivied close and ancient keep
Above the world you watch, inviolate.

There is an appeal to the "Most High" in "New Year's Eve in New York"—

O teach us at the end of toil to know
The sanctity of Laughter, and the joy
That ever walks with Beauty! Save us, Thou
Who hast so freely given of Thy strength
In other days, by Thy last gift of Grace.

"In a Roman Garden" draws us—

"Mourn not for Beauty, since all fragile things
When touched with loveliness outlive our tears
And broken laughter. . . ."

A singer from West Virginia—Elizabeth Davis Richards' book, *The Peddler of Dream* published by William Albert Broder, New York, has enjoyed two printings. *The Literary Digest* discovered to us in November from *Poetry of To-day*, the supplement of the POETRY REVIEW, the following charming water colour : "Transitory" :—

Fall is a Gypsy
With a kirtle of red.
Leaves turn acrimson
Over her head.
Torches of sumac
Burst into flame ;
Winds at the dawning
Whisper her name.

Fall—
Gather your coins
Now while you may,
Grey ghosts of summer
Travelled this way.

thereby rendering for a new writer an important service. *The Peddler of Dreams* is Miss Richards' second book—*Leaves of Laurel* preceded it—and a number of voices are raised in praise of her human, delicate and musical touch. We give from page 30 a quatrain—" Riches " :—

She did not have the wherewithal
To buy her last lone house of sod,
Yet little children loved her,
And she believed in God.

And also " The Toilers " :—

The restless feet fret all the morning hours,
While raucous voices ever beat the air ;
A ghost of laughter slips from some sad heart
That daily knows the weight of care.

There seems to be no joy for such as these . .
And yet this truth should serve them as a foil ;
The Carpenter of Nazareth has given
A lasting dignity to toil.

Confident that with deeper study Elizabeth Davis Richards will enrich her song, we congratulate her on her book.

California poems are gathered in by another POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day* contributor, Julia Boynton Green, in *This Enchanting Coast*, published in Los Angeles by The Times-Mirror Press.

" Such Days as These " arrests the reader :—

Such days as these are joy enough ,
Though other joys were scanty.
Your head aches ? Stocks are falling ? Stuff !
Such days as these are joy enough.
Think how the storms back East play rough
And bleak round hall and shanty !
Such days as these are joy enough,
Though other joys were scanty.

and " Scarlet Larkspur," a quatrain :

Out on the quivering stretches, oversweet,
With wandering perfumes, here and there a spire
Of throbbing scarlet flickers. Has the heat
Augmented till it burst in actual fire ?

and " The Pool " :—

We came upon a pool of limpid green,
A great clear flawless beryl, dropped in haste
By fierce Djinns winging past this flinty waste ;
Paler than emerald or tourmaline,
A gem with which some Brobdignagian queen
Might clasp her mighty cincture. We retraced
Our steps next day—the jewel was misplaced.
Where was it gone ? Or had it ever been ?
Vanished ! With all the mauve and saffron fret
Of moss in which the crystal thing was set.
Did they discover and retrieve their loss—
The Djinns ? Or did Poseidon lightly toss
The treasure to adorn our happy day—
Lent, and withdrawn, in his imperial way ?

Blue Water Ballads, by Clarence P. Milligan (Dorrance) the lure and charm of the sea and sea things seem to have been caught at moments. The contents page yields a score of sentient titles, and " Fog-Horns " carries the reader out to sea :

In the green pastures of the sea,
Lost in the mist,
Like a bellowing herd of frightened cattle,
I hear the foghorns call.

Foreboding sounds,
Interspersed with silence ;
As though waiting an answer from the shore,
Then sonorous roaring.

The fog-horns : " We're here to port " ;
The bells : " We're off the lee " ;
Wisps of lifting lace, water ghosts,
Cold and clammy rise, divide and join,
A roar, silence, a roar.

Very significant of our age is Mr. Milligan's " Ballad of Detroit River Rum Fleet " :

Blustering weather along the docks,
With the swish of the waves beneath ;
A call for men,
And the motors roar,
The gang's aboard—heave off once more !
The precious freight we'll ferry o'er.
All lights out for the dash across,
To that good American shore.

Winking lights in the marshes glow,
Fireflies that rise and die;
Confederate flashes,
The coast is clear;
It's a non-stop flight in the dark we'll steer,
The other coast looms black and near,
Open the throttle and slip her through,
For laws don't count out here.

What care they if skies are gay,
Or the rattling ice flows by;
With a dash of hail
Or blanketing snow,
The "gang" always knows the way to go,
One false step and you go below,
"Get it across," the orders read,
That's all we've got to know.

On foreign shores in the dead of night,
We creep ere the dawn may rise,
Fearing an ambush,
To land the "goods";
Fair and dry the cases high,
Meet the sun as he opens his eye;
Keg upon keg in the marshy ooze,
Under the dawning sky.

For it's work for men, my hearties all,
Buccaneers in a traffic strange;
A cut-throat crew,
And the motors roar;
We're all aboard, push off once more,
The precious freight we'll ferry o'er;
All lights out for the dash across
To the old American shore.

The day may come when these records in poetry will amuse the readers of 2067. In "Lake Michigan Beaches" again Mr. Milligan pictures well his acknowledgement of sea and sky:

I have seen seascapes in a frame of silver,
Done by some alchemist working paints,
Taking dull chemicals in a transmutation;
Or old cathedral chancels hung with saints,
I have seen galleries where are thickly strewn,
As vines of roses on a sunlit wall,
The ecstacies of men who worked for love,
And painted phantasies of beauty, one and all.

But if in moonlight I should chance
To be on beaches of Lake Michigan,
Perhaps a slow sea coming, to enhance
The rapture; then all those galleries
Seen in old worlds will come across to me
And be mixed beauty all set down together
Within an inland sea.

Mr. Van Dusen is to be congratulated on having been the recipient of 25 prizes for poetry to date and various medals. In *Sonnets of Great Men and Women* he gives us his reactions to some of the good and great. We find a sonnet to Lincoln, to Roosevelt, to Edison, to Emily Brontë, to Joan of Arc, to Charles Lamb, to Browning, to John Keats, to George Eliot, to Rupert Brooks, to Alan Seegar, to Shakespeare the Richest Man, etc. We will give you Shakespeare, the Richest Man:

The treasures that come down to us from old
  Are not the treasures of the sea and land,
  But human thought, more worth than all the Rand,
That gave man power to blossom and unfold;
And Shakespeare like a sun with light untold
  Used his imagination as a wand,
  Whose rays lit sea and sky on every hand,
And touched life's vast encircling shores with gold.

No El Dorado opens up such mines;
  No golden Fleece nor far-famed Odyssey
Shines half so fair as his creation shines
  With all its beauty voiced, ineffably;
For ever precious in his jewelled lines—
  The richest soul in all humanity.

With pleasant anticipation we open a second volume of Jesse L. Lasky, Jr.'s poetry—*Listening to Silence* (G. P. Putnam's Sons). The great world has grown to know his father as an outstanding genius in the wonderful new vehicle for art and poetry . . . the moving picture, and now invading the realm of speech, is prophetic in the importance of its contribution. In the New York *Sun* of July 13th, 1929, Mr. John S. Cohen, Jr., makes some very significant comments on the question of dialogues for talkies, etc.—

"The question of dialogue for talkies is still a debatable point. One school holds that it should be simple and terse, short and succinct, and the language of 'every day.' But that is not necessary. In The 'Valiant' a good entertainment, written competently in a certain shopworn theatrical manner, a character was called upon to quote one of Shakespeare's 'truths told symbolically and beautifully,' namely:

Juliet : ' Sweet, so would I :
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night ! Good night ! Parting is such
Sweet sorrow.
That I should say good night,
Till it be morrow.'
Romeo : ' Sleep dwell upon thine eyes,
Peace in thy breast !—
Would I were sleep and peace
So sweet to rest ! "

" Which is neither terse nor the language of ' everyday.' Yet, coming in the midst of the rest of ' The Valiant', which was written, not only in the language of everyday, but in the language of ' every day in the theatre,' the words and lines, delivered from the talking screen, infused and lifted an enormous audience at the Roxy. Poetry doesn't suffer in the audible cinemas, the very unreality of the medium seemingly adding a further mystic glow to the beautifully unreal yet real lines.

" Which shows that the talkies can do the ' Literary play,' with, of course, concessions to the medium which permits and requires visual variety. Maybe, indeed, the talkies are best suited to the theatre of ' romance and poetry,' rather than to the hard, photographic theatre of late yesterday afternoon and to-day."

Mr. Lasky enjoys a very immediate reaction to the beauty and importance of life. His dedication to his father will assure you of this :—

He stands alone and singing in the light
Who built of dreams and climbed among the stars
On these same frail constructions of his soul.
Perhaps Life's given him a darkest hour.
Behind, a tear-strewn grave,
Ahead, the greater silence of the night ;
But he was a conceiver and his flight
Has always sought the other side of hills.
Ah, deeper than the breaking waves flung wild,
A poet ordinate, a searcher right,
He stands alone with laughter like a child
And listens to the singing of the night.

Looking through this delightful little book we might find on every other page enjoyment. " Cosmic Mirth " follows :—

As I awaited the morning
Some lonely thought crept near
And laid a finger on my lips.

If I shook the thunder from the clouds
And dallied with the virgin moon,

The stars would fall from the sky
And rock the world
With their laughter.

and " Silk Dust "—

Lean me into the silence
And blow me the billows of night
Like the yawns of the sleepy beast
Or one darkness answering another.
Hold me long with my fingers
Entwined with sleep,
So that the evening may enter
My dreams
And one may absorb the other.

The wind ropes of the sky
Are in my hands,
And the song of the clouds
Is my song.
The breeze of the lost years
Has ascended to mist and stars
And is sped in silk dust
In the three voices
Of our evening's adventure.

When in Paris this spring I spent an evening in the company of several talented young men, and notably remember Ramon Navarro's contribution of music and Lasky's bright and charming sallies.

Questings, by H. Phelps Clawson, is the first book of one of the Toronto youth. H. Phelps Clawson finds the limitation of business life too confining, and has taken the poet's road by way of excavations in Egypt. His life work at the moment lies there, and I can think of no more fruitful ground to transplant one's self for writing lines. Through this little book there breathes the attraction of Egypt's sands. I give " The Sculptor " :—

When Egypt's dreams were pillared on the sands,
Amidst them dwelt one who could never sing ;
Yet in his heart a burning song took wing
And passed the silent gateway of his hands.
Then the dumb clay was quickened and it grew
Beneath his touch to music. Here each thought
In all its transient beauty he has caught ;
The gods he worshipped and the world he knew
Stand poised for ever. Oblivion has laid
Her veil of quiet on those once proud lips ;
But he whose dream was in his finger-tips
Lives in the glory of the songs he made.

We will not deny ourselves the pleasure of reading " Cleopatra " :—

A slave had placed a basket at her feet.
Perhaps she smiled a little as she thought
How a dwarfed thing was bringing to defeat
The giant plans that Cæsar once had wrought.
Such was to end her hopes and those dark fears
Which she had fought through hours of agony ;
All those proud triumphs of her youthful years,
And the world dream of wayward Antony.
On those lost things perhaps she mused awhile,
And felt that sometimes even gods were just,
For through that living symbol of the Nile,
Through that coiled terror stirring in the dust,
The serpent god of Egypt was to take
One triumph from lean Octavia's hand :
Perhaps she saw the sleeping pharaohs wake,
And beckon to her from their shadowy land.

Prophecy is a consolation of the second fifty years. . . . We will prophesy that Mr. Clawson's next book will be interesting.

We have also from Dorrance & Company, Mr. H. Q. Miller, Jr.'s, book *Gleanings ;* Miss A. R. Crever's *Variant Voices* published by Harr Wagner Publishing Company, San Francisco, and Mary Dell Allen's *Lilacs*. Miss Crever's book brings silvery mornings and loneliness of the desert and *Twins of the Forest* with a touch of mysticism. She is possessed of a glad faith and the singing nature.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

* * *

There is no greater service we can render Emily Dickinson and our readers than to give as a sequel to the Dynamic reference on p. 281 Mr. Auslander's beautiful picture of her in his *Letter to Emily Dickinson,* that he in his generosity makes available for us, and that is to appear in his volume *Letters to Women,* to be published this Fall by Harper and Brothers :

They speak of you as a recluse
In dull commiserative sighs :
As though denial were a ruse,
As though your bravery were lies,
As though it smelled of something pale
And sacrificial to prevail
Against the flesh, against the heart :
As though your wry and radiant art
Were like the shed of silver mail
That sits upon the frightened snail ;
As though a " No " instead of " Yes "
Has labelled you an anchoress ;

As though the nail, the blood, the tear,
The terrible whisper, the red spear,
The lantern and the fatal kiss
Were somehow love's antithesis!

They could not hear your little moan,
  Your fingers tugging at the stone:
They could not know you tall and risen
Nor understand how tight a prison
The world can build with liberty;
And how miraculously free
Courage with both feet fast in hell
Can be: they see, but not so well;
They never see the light that spills
Like stars among your daffodils;
Nor in your orchard ever guess
The shy feet of your loneliness.

Balboa of your fate, you stared
  On a Pacific none had dared.
The salt remorseless wrench and roll
Of the unplumbed and single soul.
But you, supplied by bird and bee
With telegrams of eternity,
With bulletins that were stripped to serve
The spirit's naked bone and nerve;
You in your garden in the sun,
Or in the day when there was none,
You were aware, oh so aware
Of something fiercer than despair:
The terrible consuming beauty
Of what a dead age once called duty;
Of what our age of public paint
And public love and unrestraint
In all things else considers now
As out of date as any vow,
As hopelessly old-fashioned as
The lovely thing your silence was.

But we, what do we know beyond
  The moment's spurious diamond;
The clever phrase, the fulsome stress
Upon each other's cleverness—
Until a maudlin stupor steals
Into our muddled heads and heels,
And on the sickened brain beats only
The frantic whimper, "Lonely! Lonely!"

For never were we lonelier
Than now : Oh, never, never were
Men and women so afraid
Of being alone, or so dismayed
At prospect of an hour that delves
Into their dark bewildered selves,
Recoiling from the hell that darts
In fiery hungers from their hearts.
The soiled, the sullen little boys
And little girls who drown with noise
The questions tapping canes on stone,
The blind implacable monotone :
Alone, alone, alone, alone.
And yet we sigh, " How much she missed—
The lovelorn sentimentalist ! "
You who were filled ; who broke the bread
Of dew and stardust and were fed ;
Who broke the silver fish and ate
The banquet of the Potentate ;
Who shut the door on world's delight
That turns to vinegar ere night ;
Who shut the door and shook apart
The doors of Heaven with your heart ;
Who in your Amherst garden found
The passion and the bloody swound,
The red sweat dropping on the ground.

Emily with your eyes the colour
Of sherry ; with your jasmine pallor ;
The velvet cap upon that hair
Whose warm bronze caught a golden glare
When sunlight jewelled it, whose breath
Parted the red lips, the fine teeth
Tiny as a squirrel's, whose
Upper long lip could refuse
What the full underlip desired ;
Whose spirit trembled and transpired
Through your sweet flesh like liquid light
That flashes on a summer night ;
Whose ardent hand was like a flower
That shut its wings there for an hour ;
Whose whisper was a moth, whose word
Shivered and piped like the small bird
Hidden in alders near some lake
Where twilight and the heart both break.

Ah, Emily, when you said " No,"
When you said " Never," when you said " Go "

Did he hear what you said unsaid
As, at the gate turning this head,
He saw your little head turned too,
And wept and went and suddenly knew
The Soul's superior instants (your
Phrase) those, only those endure ?
The parted Guest, the unsipped Wine,
The Meat untouched, the Palestine
Anticipated in the sense
Of some perpetual Imminence ;
The shadow of His Palm upon
The brow of His Centurion.
Therefore in that terrific niche
Wherein you found yourself so rich,
So definite, so undefined ;
In that enormous inch of Mind
As infinite as in the sea's
Pink shell thunder profundities,
Or in the acorn smoulders Oak,
Or Rome's blaze in a puff of smoke,
Or rainbows burn in the cocoon,
Or from her dead disk the new moon
Stretches a first faint velvet horn
And April's antlered night is born—
Therefore, clasping the Fact that is,
You found your glittering emphasis ;
And then and vividly thereafter
The tinted bubble of your laughter
Lifted and sang from room to room
Of your triumphant daily tomb.
Under your domestic snood
The drama of the neighbourhood
Gathered and groped and was resolved
To breathless notes whose wisdom halved
Bereavement or whose beauty doubled
The pleasures of the few untroubled.
With ungrammatical defiant
Ecstacies that tripped some giant
Neatly in a puckered phrase ;
With programmes of the commonplace
In bird or flower keyed to such
Excitement by your dancing touch ;
With your aerial gossip heard
At dawn, at dusk, from bee, from bird ;
With private dialogue in plush
Reported by a rapid thrush ;
With snowdrop symptoms on your lawn

The golden doctor of the dawn
Identifies as March's most
Premature and candid ghost;
With orioles, if you inquire,
Putting your cherry tree on fire;
With mole and mouse and twinkling ant
Imperial and nonchalant.
You know the street and the blurred number
Of blossoms faint with recent slumber;
Arbutus on a rock, the wet
Unwarranted first violet
As yellow as a Louis-d'or
The columbine like Kohinoor,
The adder's tongue, the trillium,
April's flag and April's drum
And April's flute more delicate
Than footfalls in the waxed estate
Whose polished corridors declare
Like bells the heart that tiptoes there.

To think of getting a poem tucked
With flowers, itself a flower plucked
Out of dark anguish, out of hope
To vindicate an envelope,
With red carnation for a stamp
As though the letter had a lamp!
Dear gentle daily household nun
Announcing sunset and the sun;
Self-shorn, self-kerchiefed, self-restored
Unto the enigmatic Lord;
Flying from a sulphurous God
To the Pearl Presence in the pod;
Striking from a rock that Moses
Never knew, the blood of roses;
Scaling Sinais with a noun
And in some black verb plunging down.
But always without compromise,
Always with accurate brown eyes
That would not veil the too uncouth
Or blur the vision of the truth;
As, when a girl, beneath the shade
The clustering syringa made
Between the flutter and the shout
Of play you puzzled problems out;
Or in the dim delicious barn,
With sunlight like a spool of yarn

That snarled in interrupted gold,
Searching for freckled eggs to hold,
Your heart skipped like a mouse in danger
To see the sun enact the Manger,
Established Bethlehem, decree
The Adoration of the Three,
Convert the straw to gold, the oat
To rubies, summon ass and goat,
And turn the powdered local air
To frankincense and fervent myrrh !

So always what you saw became
  Translated from the wick to flame :
Through the dark crystal of your eye,
Curved by the soul's intensity,
Life and Love and Death would pass
In points of fire under glass :
The common agonies of life
Twisting like a casual knife
Into the heart, behind the brain ;
The quick unstudied cloud of pain ;
The massive hush, the marble breath,
The curt omnipotence of death—
All these dilated to a dot,
Magnified to a fiery knot
Beneath the frugal frosty lens
Of your dispassionate double sense.

But always, but above all, that
  Intolerable, magnificent ;
The awful unknown sacrament
Of love, the luminous event
Whiter than death, the cheated lip,
The thwarted womb, the steady drip
Of blood and tears from bitter wicks
Upon the mutual crucifix.
How different from our dreary fashion
Of playing little games with passion,
The flippant and ironic mode
Of using love as episode,
Of chinning to the fourteenth line
To make a trivial valentine.

Ah well, when spurts another spring
Of grass and when your linnets sing.
Or when upon the eastern slopes
Your lilies and your heliotropes

Lure you to elude your Warden
And wander wistfully your garden
Like Enna's lonely child, like her
Slipping your jealous Kidnapper
To greet your robins back again,
Your larkspur and your cyclamen,
Sweet William, pansy, pink and stock,
Your butterflies on every rock
Fugitively anchored to
A wharf of gold . . . O brief and blue
And bittersweet the summer goes,
Even your local pines, your crows,
With the immemorial rose.
And your autumnal hornet staggers
Drunk with drenched pears ; golden daggers
Of corn stand stacked ; the muffled sheep
In sun-dust, pink and silver, sleep.
And then the Cattle Show that starts
With fakirs' tents and peddlars' carts
That hurt so strangely. Then the snow
That follows on the Cattle Show,
Shutting you in, until there gleams
Your blue peninsula of dreams . . .
And then the liquid spring once more
Rapping diamonds at your door—
And you so white, so small beside
The early blossoms like a bride ;
The flowers lighted at your bed ;
Your eyes, your mouth so quieted.

* * *

First the Blade is a collection of excellent California student verse, individual in outlook and expression. California college expansion is an amazing thing, and the spontaneous contributions to this small book are no less surprising. A very casual invitation brought over four hundred and fifty contributions from thirty-three universities, colleges, and junior colleges in the State. The resulting selection represents the varied literary ideas and impulses of youth to-day on the Pacific Coast, and is very illuminating. A group of students at Redlands University were responsible for the editing and management, and have uncommon reason to be proud of the result of a difficult and delicate task.

* * *

Commenting on Professor Einstein's latest theory the *Los Angeles Record* points out that Shakespeare saw eye to eye with Einstein. But he put it more beautifully. In *The Tempest* we find this :

. . . the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leaves not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

What is that but the transfiguration of Einstein's higher mathematics into music? Poetry and logic, carried to their highest points, meet. The seer and the scientist see the same vision. And what is that vision? Simply this: that the one reality, in a world of moving shadows, is the internal one. Only the soul stands sure. All the rest is merely the stage setting for its earthly incarnation. You, yourself, are more enduring and immortal than sun, stars or earth.

* * *

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;

. . . . .

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a man, my son.

How these lines by Kipling gave encouragement to Mr. Philip Snowden at The Hague was related by Mrs. Snowden at a school speech-day at Diss, Norfolk. In the darkest hour which preceded dawn, she said, when the gloom was so intense that it was difficult to distinguish friends from foes, they sat on the front, she writing on a piece of paper and he looking out to sea, anxious and thoughtful. She passed the paper to him. He recognised the words at once, and nodded and said yes.

* * *

Countee Cullen, whose poem "The Black Christ" has been published by Putnam, was born in New York City and reared in the conservative atmosphere of a Methodist parsonage. His first book of poems, *Color*, published in New York in 1925, was awarded a prize of 400 dollars and a gold medal as being the most distinguished literary production of the year by a member of the Negro race. Countee Cullen has also won the John Reed Memorial Prize.

* * *

The charming individual quality of Eric Field's poems (*Back Street*, Jarrolds, 1/-), is indicated by "July" printed on another page.

TWO INTIMATE BIOGRAPHIES

THE filial piety of a biography written by a son or a daughter of the subject tends to disarm the critic; nevertheless, all sentimental leanings must be eliminated from a criticism that would achieve any accurate judgment. Viola Meynell's Memoir of her mother (Jonathan Cape) aims at two objects: the one to reveal to the reader a charming woman, the other to prove that this attractive personality was, also, an authoress who excelled all women in her poetry and prose writings.

Alice Meynell's attractiveness need not detain us long. The somewhat over-estatic evidence of many men of note prove it beyond a doubt; also there are not lacking signs that the recipient of so profuse an admiration was not averse from it: in her early years she records in her diary that she went to a ball where "all the men wanted to quarrel to dance with me," and that although "I had no regular flirtation" it was "glorious fun." Many years after, when a wife and a mother, she writes to Coventry Patmore that, after shedding tears over his poems, she, in delightful feminine anti-climax, goes out to buy a frock to please him! Undoubtedly the prepondering factor of her charm was rooted in her intense femininity. This masculine virility of her prose writings first caught the attention which her charm as woman sealed. One paragraph in the Memoir leaves a somewhat unpleasant flavour; it is where the young Roman Catholic neophyte is attracted by her priest and the priest by her. This "friendship," says the Memoir, "in keeping with the strict precautionary rules" of the priesthood, had to come to an end; but the "Renouncement," inspired by this episode, is love, not friendship; and the love of a priest and his pupil is revolting rather than beautiful. An Abélard's "precautionary rules" should operate before such an emotion arises, not after. Even at the very fall of the curtain, Alice Meynell, feminine to the core, turned away her face from her own son, fearing he should note the ravages illness had made; and gave him her hand to kiss, making the quotation on "her bluest veins." This action and quotation throw a veil of artificiality over the scene. But "so sacred in the eyes of all London is Mrs. Meynell, that I know this article will be considered nothing less than a brutal and revolting crime." So wrote Max Beerbohm, and we echo it; he adds, on behalf of good writers who are not so lucky in being championed by eminent persons, "Between her and Mr. Coventry Patmore the shuttlecock of praise has flashed incessantly." This was true; it is left for us to decide whether the inherent power of the object created the praise, or that the praise created the possibility of power?

For it is hardly to be disputed that certain authors have been launched, as it were, by their environment, and by the efforts of their friends; others have had to force a way through thorny circumstances and in violent opposition to those around them. The instant recognition accorded to Alice Meynell's essays was, it may be, their due;

but a troubled doubt intrudes itself as to the value of the judgment that could place Coventry Patmore's clerically-gaitered verse on a far loftier pinnacle than the wild genius of Francis Thompson's poems. " The Angel in the House " is but a mild plaster figure if set beside the glowing, mystic, entrancing " Mistress of Vision."

There is a pathetic picture of Thompson, " his face worn by pain," waiting and waiting for the woman, he, in all purity, adored, to look at his poem, " The Portrait "—lines all in praise of her. He writes a long letter on this avoidance that gave him such poignant torture as he could ill bear. He says, " I am unhappy when out of your sight : and would pass every hour, if I could, in your exquisite presence, only to feel the effluence of your spirit in contact with mine." We are forced to the conclusion that the spirit of Alice Meynell could not keep pace with that of Francis Thompson, this strange poet of whom Wilfred Whitten wrote—" I think the secret of his strength was this : that he had cast up his accounts with God and man, and thereafter stood in the mud of earth with a heart wrapped in such fire as touched Isaiah's lips." It is this " fire " that is lacking in Alice Meynell's poetry. Beautiful as much of it is, we catch glimpses of the arbiter of words behind it all : she was never whirled off her feet by a poetic fury that sweeps up mere words as a fierce gale drives all leaves before its onward rush. So far and no farther—seemed to be her watchword and her breast plate ; this is evident in the cessation of her intimate friendship with Coventry Patmore, her apparent withdrawal from pale, passionate Francis Thompson ; loves which she had not the strength to accept and return : and it is this lack of strength that she laments in her letter to the nun.

Coventry Patmore wrote of " Renouncement "—" This, like all Mrs. Meynell's verse, is true, beautiful, tender and negatively almost faultless ; but it does not attain the classical and only sound standard." And Le Gallienne makes a severe reservation in regard to her prose : " She puts too much into a sentence. The words have no room to breathe in." In the *Life of George Meredith* there is quoted that he said to her of a book she proposed to write : " You could not do it. It is beyond you." She must have felt this harsh sincerity as strange, coming from one who admired and appreciated her delicate prose with oft-expressed adulation.

We find in this Memoir the portrait of a most charming, gentle, reserved woman : we are given an insight into a mind that was Greek in its severity of written words ; we see one who loved beautiful and homely things—and finally one who was loved and praised almost beyond measure by her friends. The final verdict on her work lies with posterity, the verdict on her personality will remain unchanged.

The Life of George Meredith has been referred to. It is written by Robert Esmonde Sencourt (Chapman and Hall) and is a full and

intimate record of one who, in more senses than one, " never sauntered, never lounged " ; but, " strode with the stride of a giant." An article in this REVIEW on this " giant " drew attention to the poetry of Meredith's prose, and Mr. Sencourt also insists on this truth : " For it is the excellence of Meredith that he can endow prose with a poetic rarity of beauty." Whether we can fully endorse the verdict on *Richard Feverel* is perhaps doubtful. Mr. Sencourt says : " What shocked the world of 1859 was that for which he will be blessed for ages by natures which are richer and more sensitive to life." But it is the joy of mental wrestle and combat that the mind experiences in reading *Richard Feverel.* This alertness rather than any particular desire to " bless " the author ; for Meredith stood for an open-eyed courage in facing life, he did not, at any time, offer a gospel of explanation or of hope. Again, Mr. Sencourt dwells on Meredith's hatred of snobbishness, but he omits to notice that when he attempted to hide all traces of his tailoring ancestry, Meredith was swayed by snobbery [1] ; his hatred of money, " money how vile," and yet in his novels money is as lavish about his heroes and heroines as was the golden shower about Danae. It is in the perplexing contradictions of his character that Meredith makes so interesting a study. His passionate admiration and tender affection for the many women who entered his life—Mrs. Meynell herself makes a little boast that she had received what would have been, in other circumstances, a proposal of marriage from him ; and Janet Ross, re-reading old letters, exclaims, " Good God ! my poet must have been in love with me," and yet this lover of women could show himself as utterly unforgiving, and as cruelly harsh to one he had once loved.

Excellent, and full of detail as Mr. Sencourt's *Life of Meredith* is, we feel he has too greatly avoided the " amazing marriage " in Meredith's spirit of one quality with its exact opposite. It may well be that Meredith alone could have drawn for us so composite, so variegated, so complex a character as his own proved to be. He who exclaimed " Good food, how gross " could yet assist his first wife to compile a cookery book ! He loved deeply and sincerely his second wife and yet, Mr. Sencourt tells us, he could cut her with sarcasms ; he said he adored his elder son and yet could write a cold and harsh description of the young man.

Mr. Sencourt rightly and truly admires the great genius and power revealed in Meredith's novels, but he says wisely, " Meredith would have had greater influence as a novelist if his heart had dictated simplicity " ; he felt, he loved, he suffered, but he put himself into the position of the surgeon who watches an operation on himself.

It appears as if his own expressed desire would ultimately be fulfilled—that he should be judged as a poet rather than a novelist :

[1] See the admirable study of " The Dead Titan " by Arthur Hood in the July 1929 POETRY REVIEW : ED. P. REV.

and this because a poet may take in his stride expressions that assume artificiality in prose.

If we have one fault to find with this life, in its "amplitude, philosophy and richness of style," it is that the author has dealt with Meredith's poetry as an indication of his mind, and not as a tower of rich beauty and truth in itself. The "Life" was needed, the "image of one of the greatest of English writers"; his poetic output would perhaps be only justly dealt with in a volume to itself.[1]

* * *

If it is true that "all the world loves a lover" then all the world should read *Andromeda in Wimpole Street* by Dormer Creston (Thornton Butterworth, 10s. 6d.),—a romance of one of the greatest idylls in modern literary history, the love story of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett—a charmingly written book, containing, perhaps, a slightly over lavish collection of extracts from their love letters—125 pages of almost unadulterated love letters are likely to be a trifle overwhelming to some, even from the inspired pens of R.B. and E.B.B. It is a joy, however, to read the touches of literary gossip and find constant reference to such household names as Tennyson, Wordsworth, Landor, and other personalities. These letters bring out the sweetness of Elizabeth's character, only to be found in one who is almost perpetually an invalid, shut away from the outside world, and living in a wonderful world of her own after the advent of "Perseus." On one occasion she exclaims "I shudder to look back to the days when you were not for me. Was ever life so like death before?" and again "I have no one in the world who will hold me to make me live in it, except only you—I have come back for you alone." There are delightful cameos of her dog Flush—"Flush had his head out of the window the whole way—except when he had a frightful vision at the water of somebody washing a little dog—which made him draw back into the carriage with dilated eyes and quivering ears, and set about licking my hands, for an 'Ora pro nobis'."

The dauntless character of Browning is clearly depicted in a letter, when hearing that there is a likelihood of Elizabeth going abroad for the winter he writes, "Well, and may I not as easily ask leave to come to-morrow at the Muezzin, as next Wednesday at 3?"

The story surrounding these letters moves quickly and delightfully to its appointed end, and the fact that that end is already well known does not in any way diminish the interest of the reader.

[1] THE POETRY REVIEW July article may be regarded as a synopsis of this volume; it has been utilised already for University Extension Lecture purposes.

Selected Poems by W. B. Yeats (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net) is an apt title, for in this compact volume of 200 pages Mr. Yeats has "arranged in chronological order whatever lyrical and narrative poems of mine best please my friends or myself or best illuminate one another."

IMAGISM AND CONVENTION

IT was said of the Imagists that they did at least stop bad poets from writing, and certainly the poet who is deprived of a set form must compose entirely by ear; he cannot shirk responsibility by counting syllables. The reader, too, is compelled to listen and experiment until, by finding the most musical accentuation of each phrase, he discovers the essential rhythm of the poem. Thus the study of *vers libre* may do much to improve both the practice and the appreciation of poetry. Then, too, the emotional reticence and concrete imagery of the school of Richard Aldington and F. S. Flint taught poet and reader to extract the fullest value from each word. No one can read the early work in Mr. Aldington's *Collected Poems* (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.) without finding his sensibility sharpened. The recurrence in these poems of one image—stone under water—is curious; it recalls the cold Greek loveliness which is found in Helen Doolittle's "Sea Garden," and, perhaps for the first time in this century, in Stephen Phillips' *Beautiful Lie the Dead*:

Beautiful lie the dead;
  Clear comes each feature;
Satisfied not to be,
  Strangely contented.

Like ships, the anchor dropped,
  Furled every sail is;
Mirrored with all their masts
  In a deep water.

And to-day it echoes in the work of Peter Quennell and Richard Church and, less perfectly, in that of W. J. Turner.

But Imagism, though a useful discipline, is not the whole of poetry, and one by one its exponents, perceiving other values, have fallen away from the strict rules laid down in the early days. Especially have they disobeyed the injunction not to attempt philosophical poetry. Lesser poets, as well as Coleridge and Shakespeare, have found youth's end in lonely lucubration on things too deep for minor poetry. The war made Imagism, and then destroyed it: to-day when the intolerable memories of that insanity are softening into kind illusions of "the good old days," it is salutary to review these photographs of stark brutality. But Aldington saw deeper than the beastliness, and deeper than the heroism in *Machine Guns*:

Gold flashes in the dark,
And on the road
Each side, behind, in front of us,
Gold sparks
Where the fierce bullets strike the stones.

In a near shell-hole lies a wounded man,
The stretcher-bearers bending over him;

And at our feet
Cower shrinkingly against the ground
Dark shadowy forms of men.

Only we two stand upright;
All differences of life and character smoothed out
And nothing left
Save that one foolish tie of caste
That will not let us shrink.

It is here, perhaps, in the war poems, that Mr. Aldington is at his clearest; he does at least know what he hates, but he lacks Herbert Read's capacity for sympathy. Like Read, he has since turned to philosophy: not intellectually as do philosophers, but in a vital struggle to find a meaning, a motive, for existence; that is, to find a standard of values. In the amusing 'Songs for Puritans, humour provides a momentary respite. These are more skilful essays in a manner of the past than anything since Joyce's chamber music. But the problem is too pressing to be evaded. There is the old clash of the ideal and actual, but "A Fool i' the Forest" is obscure because Mr. Aldington does not clearly envisage his own problems: he is not the artist struggling against his society; the conflict arises from the fact that he is essentially the artist of another culture. Not alone among modern artists he is nearer to scholasticism than he is to that Baconian materialism which, thanks to its product, modern industry, has become the common mental habit of our time. This long poem, then, presents no harmony: the old discipline is relaxed and Mr. Aldington allows himself satire and colloquial parody:

How lovely are the Bournemouth bands
That warble on the pier
With here and there a Communist
And here and there a peer.

But he is not a master of this newer manner and still he harks back to recall:

So at twenty, I beheld the Gulf of Naples,
All my being towered into a splendid flame—
Sunlight sparkled on the sea
Odysseus cut with carven prow,
And the sirens still were singing.
Even rock-cleft blossomed with narcissus,
Every slope with broom and vine and lemon;
Every hill was sacred to a goddess.

Mezzatin, the Fool, is killed in battle and nothing is found to replace the youthful exuberance of which he is the symbol. The "I" of the poem—the artistic mind—suppresses The Conjuror (the Intelli-

gence) and makes a nominal submission to commercial civilization. And yet on sleepless nights

To the palace of the ancient King I come,
Leaning heavily upon my staff,
Singing but one last song.

I am but a murmur of words,
I am but a dark vision,
A dream in the night.

There is no intellectual solution to this problem of the feelings, but the existence of this conflict is itself evidence of the value of existence, and in art the adequate poetic statement of a problem in all its depth and implications will itself resolve the conflict; made articulate, the problem vanishes, because the act of bringing the words into poetic relation with each other must harmonize the elements they symbolize. And even Mr. Aldington would admit that the *Waste Land* can bring the reader nearer to that hypothetical catharsis than can *A Fool i' the Forest*.

Mr. Mark Van Doren is one of the very few anthologists to whom we are grateful; his *Anthology of World Poetry* (Cassell, 10s. 6d.) which contains nearly 1000 pages of poetry in translation and over 200 pages of original work, possesses one great merit; the bulk of its contents are unfamiliar, even to those fairly well-read in English poetry. A certain patronising attitude—the fruit of a bad translation of a foolish proverb about the evil and folly of translation—has long been adopted towards all translations of poetry. The present volume will compel revaluation; for, although the speech of any country is the expression of a culture, an environment and mode of thought and feeling peculiar to that country, there is no reason why a poet should not become sufficiently familiar with an alien culture to obtain, on reading one of its poems, an experience which might find expression in a valuable poem in his own language. Mr. Van Doren has been at pains to include only those translations which are themselves poems of merit and, though for example some may argue that Cowley's *Drinking* is, despite its padding, essentially a better poem than Stanley's *All things drink*, in general the volume shows a masterly discrimination as well as monumental labour. Thus a selection of Arthur Symons' renderings of Baudelaire is printed which, except in *Les Hiboux*, is so judicious that it conceals the grosser of the faults which Mr. Symons possesses as translator of this particular poet. Compiler and publishers are to be congratulated on using modern copywright work when this was of a high standard: it is pleasant to find the excellent translations by Edgell Rickword, Arthur Waley, Allen Tate, Louis Untermeyer, Havelock Ellis, and our contributor, Wilfred Thorley,

even though Humbert Wolfe is unfortunately missing, as is Professor Garrod. Jethro Bithell, Ludwig Lewishon and Babette Deutsche deserve to be better known in England, though sometimes their individual techniques seem to be superimposed upon refractory material.

Among the original poems there is enough striking work by Robinson Jeffers, Robert Frost, George Santayana, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, H. D., Robert Graves, Padraic Colum, Moira O'Neill and E. A. Robinson to compensate for the reprinting of 100 pages of familiar romanticism, but what is English poetry without its Skelton?

On page 303 (Matthew Prior: *A Farewell*) there is a curious misprint.

Mr. Gerald Gould enjoys the fortunate conviction that beauty is not far to seek; he leaves statesmen to build a kindlier and more orderly society and intellectual problems trouble him not at all. For twenty years he has been writing rural and domestic poems and these are now collected in a handsome volume published by Gollancz (12s. 6d.). He cannot claim the sympathy we give to innovators, those who strike new goldfields; the vein he mines is common property, poets from Mannyng to Meredith and Masefield have worked it: it is the English love of country things and the morality which puts a conjugal felicity above all else. As craftsman, too, he shows no novelty, and it is by his mastery of conventional technique that he must stand or fall. And stand he does, despite such stumbles as the sibilant conclusion of the delicately imagined "Portrait" which is as pleasing to the eye as it is twisting to the tongue:—

> Elucidatory by grace
> Of light shed on the human task,
> Her beautiful and silent face
> Answers the things she does not ask.

Mr. Gould's first poem to gain popularity was "Wanderthirst" and even to-day, in face of Masefield, Kipling and a host of Week-End imitators, it reveals a music obvious enough to make a wide appeal while guarding just sufficient subtlety to be distinctive:—

> Beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the sea,
> And East and West the wanderthirst that will not let me be;

This is the satisfactory expression of a widespread ineffectual longing, not of the passion that leads men to the sea and jungle. It wakens the desire only to lull it back to sleep again. The gentle bucolic feeling in the early poems is dressed in a well-worn poetic diction which is reliable enough but, even when it does not blur the vision, diminishes the concreteness of the thing depicted:

You walk in a strange way,
Your motions sing;
Your eyes have a thing to say,
A secret thing.

This diffusive poetry effects only a temporary harmony in the mind. Shelley is beauty wrapped in cotton wool; the best of Shakespeare directs and has its part in common life. Mr. Gould's rustic harmony is produced by shutting out consideration of a crude reality and by using abstract terms. It is provincial poetry and subject to a rude awakening. The poetry of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Blake, Donne and many other poets is universal: it has a place for hobnail as well as morning mist. And this digression is not irrelevant. Mr. Gould's poems of married life come closer to the universal. He has been honest to himself and has seen clearly the subtle estrangement that must arise between two sensitive creatures save when intellect and sensibility are submerged in the willing blindness of first love. How that estrangement can give rise to bitterness, the poet knows, but in his poetry he shows how an attitude transcending tolerance and bitterness is born. We compass heaven and hell within.

Three lovely angels guard the gates of Hell—
Three great archangels with the saddest eyes
That ever held memories of Paradise,
As the dusk pool we know of in the dell
Gathered last night a host of stars that fell,
And kept them still and clear. The three surmise
The purpose of their mournful enterprise:
By name they are Michael, Raphael, Gabriel.

The guards of Heav'n have mournful work to do:
They are Michael, Raphael, Gabriel by name:
Their eyes are sadder than the fallen flame
In the dusk pool we know of, I and you.
Some souls say: "It is Hell we are travelling to";
Some: "It is Heav'n." The angels are the same.

Two Wise and Witty Professors of Poetry

Most of the addresses in *The Profession of Poetry and Other Lectures* by H. W. Garrod (Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.) were delivered during the five years the author held the Chair of Poetry at Oxford. They show the scholarship and honest thinking that we have come to expect from Professor Garrod, who can always say something fresh about much discussed questions and drive home his points with ready wit. All the lectures are interesting and often extremely amusing. It was his intention, for so long a period as he held the Chair of Poetry, to lecture upon "good poets rather than upon bad ones" and it is worth notice that he chooses for two of his subjects Rupert Brooke and Mr. A. E. Housman, whom, with the late Mr. Phillimore, he counts

as the "modern" poets who have produced the greatest poetry. Professor Garrod's opinions upon contemporary verse have been called "Victorian," yet, as he says himself, "though I was born in the Victorian Age, I like it less than most; and I sometimes wonder whether Matthew Arnold was not its best poet." A few quotations may show the soundness of his views on modern poetry; they are his own and extraordinarily free from the prejudices of any age, either the Victorian, in which he was born, the Georgian, in which he is working, or the age of the Classics, in which he was brought up.

> "Perhaps to some I shall seem to be speaking academically; and yet I feel myself to be touching deep realities, when I say that I find, in this disquiet of the times, no circumstance of happier augury than the fact that more than at any other season, as I think, in our history, poetry and the study of poetry engage interest and inform action. The causes of this I will not venture here to explore. Let me only say, in parenthesis, that I am not much inclined to credit the facile generalizations of those who believe that literature is either made, or made better, by the operation of great wars."
>
> "One quality the new poetry has without which great poetry cannot be: it has immense faith in itself; and not to believe that from this high confidence, infused through so wide a range of youth, there must necessarily ensue great consequences for the national life and art is to be either very old or seriously deficient in poetry."
>
> "I hope that I shall not, to youth aspirant of immortal garlands, seem to hold out injurious deterrents, if I suggest that, of the great mass of students and practitioners of poetry—never before so numerous—not all, or not enough, have figured to themselves how difficult the business of poetry has become. I am not sure, indeed, that the poetry of to-day sufficiently asks itself what it would be at. Mainly lyrical, it is content to depict moods; and that these are important moods, moods that matter, or that they are the moods of men who matter, of this we are given often, I think, only imperfect assurance. Poetry seems ill-paid, indeed, but easy. Yet never, I fancy, was it harder."
>
> "I cannot but feel it strange, how this poetry, born of the war, comes back so much upon self—of which the war was so grandly forgetful; and how often it wants just that without which no war is won, discipline."

There are many more passages we should like to quote, but can only recommend everyone interested in English literature to read the whole book. The lectures on Byron and Coleridge; that on "Cowley and the Metaphysicals," in which Professor Garrod explains the extraordinary fame of that writer in his own day and his obscurity ever since, and restores him to his rightful place as "the master always of a pure and genuine English"; the particularly discerning

study of Hazlitt, with whom he has so strong a fellow feeling ; " How to Know a Good Book from a Bad " ; and the appreciation of the late Sir Walter Raleigh, are other fine pieces of criticism containing, I think, " no commonplace, and no line that licks the dust."

Professor Garrod in his inaugural lecture pays a short tribute to W. P. Ker who was his immediate predecessor at Oxford and died suddenly, while still Professor of Poetry. " Certainly," he says, " Ker was a scholar, one of the finest which this country has produced. Yet he had a depth of feeling and perception which has nothing to do with scholarship." *Form and Style in Poetry* (Macmillan) is a collection of Ker's lectures, edited by Professor R. W. Chambers and obtained partly from the notebooks of old students, partly from a verbatim report taken down by Dr. Hitchcock, and partly from the lecturer's own incomplete notes. At the end of the book are the examples of rhythms which he printed and distributed to his class as illustrations of his lectures. These alone show the depth and breadth of his learning ; they include rhythms from old Latin, French, Provençal, Portuguese, Spanish, and English poems. He believes that a study of the development of English poetry is useless without knowing its foreign counterparts ; " those French and Latin verses were in the air when the English verses came into being, and the English verses cannot be understood without them." We need to hear the other people's music " because we know that the old poets in England heard it." The book is an important addition to the history of poetry-making in all its forms, though the author has a rather specialized idea of poetical form. " The poem as an individual thing is all form ; what is not form in it is not poetry." He touches on the difficulties of classification ; on the changes of fashion in literature · on successive styles in English poetry, and many kindred subjects : there are five lectures on the history of the Ballads and three on Chaucer and the Scottish Chaucerians. The real value of the collection lies in the fact that it is W. P. Ker who obtained all this information, assimilated it, and reproduced it with his inimitable wisdom and clarity.

* * *

To those who despondently avow that the language of America is becoming so degenerate and foreignized as to be largely unintelligible to British people, two volumes of verse published by the Macmillan Co. afford encouraging contradiction.

Golden Falcon, by Robert P. T. Coffin (Macmillan), is an outstanding book in many respects. The author's outlook is original, his style virile, and his imagery vividly arresting. All these factors are particularly evident in the poem called " The Spider." " Wild Geese," given below, is less significant, but, of its kind, nearer perfection and of a more quotable length :—

Beauty is coming north again
Slanting eager as the rain ;

With necks like arrows on the bow
Across the sky the wild geese go.

Beauty is coming moulded by
High winds of the upper sky
Into shapes that burn to be
In a patterned symmetry.

Loveliness comes like a host
Of swift ships headed for a coast,
Every sail and every keel
Pointed at a common weal.

Comeliness in company
Every wing where it should be,
The great wild geese with necks like kings
Held each other with their wings.

Keen and clean as young desire,
Straight as tongues of evening fire,
Beauty is coming welded bright
From the anvil of Spring's might.

Pheidas, by John Galen Howard (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.), though too ambitious to be altogether successful, is an interesting and sympathetic study of the greatest sculptor. The author has clothed the bare bones of history convincingly with a good deal of imagination and shows a considerable insight into temperament. A sculptor's horror of mutilating the human form which he reverses almost to the pitch of idolatory is conveyed in a passage describing a training camp where every Greek capable of bearing arms was preparing himself to repel the threatened Persian invasion :—

It was a time of toil
And tearing. In the camp itself I found
The life almost intolerable. Skill
In rending and destroying, taking life,
Or, even more abhorrent, crippling it,
Went grudgingly against the grain with me.
I loathed the implication of each stroke
We were so sedulously taught.

The discursive style, however, flattens out a great deal of the inspiration. The book is dedicated to " John G. Neihardt, Poet and Friend," another American whose work the POETRY REVIEW has recognized as strong and beautiful.

God's Trombones, by James Weldon Johnson (Allen and Unwin,

3s. 6d.) is described as " Some Negro Sermons in Verse." The author has attempted to reproduce something of the rhythmical rhetoric of the old-time black preacher from which the Spirituals had their birth. A good deal of the impelling fusion of paraphrased scripture and spontaneous imagery may be gathered from the following stanza out of " Creation " :—

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay ;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down ;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corners of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand ;
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in his own image ;

Then into it he blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.

Ruth and Celia Duffin have collaborated in writing a volume of verse called *Escape* (Dent, 4s. 6d.). Many of the poems are in Irish dialect and their very considerable charm atones for some failure in technique. They are of that tantalizing quality known as " nearly very good " where the " high moments " are indisputable but where the intervals are weak. " Tread Softly In " is a poignant little poem :

Tread softly in, she prayeth in her sleep,
Tread softly in, she hath her soul to keep,
Her peace to win ;
Only last night through the blinding rain
A little bird tapped at the window pane,
And she let it in.
O Mary Mother, a bird at the pane,
And she let it in !

A draught of herbs we brewed to give her rest
And laid St. Bridget's charm upon her breast
To free from sin ;
Loud prayed the priest, but prayed in vain,
Pining and faint with mortal pain,
She lies within.
O Mary Mother, a bird at the pane,
And she let it in !

Oh! pray for her she hath great need of prayer!
But yesterday she was divinely fair,
Rose red her skin;
Only last night through the blinding rain,
A little bird tapped at the window pane,
And she let it in!

In *The Book of Beauty* by H. M. Green (Dent, 5s.), the author takes us with him into Fairy Land in search of his lost love who has been stolen away and replaced by a changeling. The book contains some delightful passages yet the whole episode and its termination pleases rather than impresses the reader.

There is nothing distinctive about *My Thoughts and I*, by Helen Trafford Moore (Gorham Press). Pleasant thoughts put pleasantly and metrically are hardly sufficient pass for the slopes of Parnassus.

John Oxenham has written a commendatory preface to *From the Heart of Motherhood* (Longmans Green and Co.) whose author hides her identity under the signature of "One who has fathomed its pain and its bliss." The thoughts contained in these poems, most of which are carefully formed sonnets, are undoubtedly sincere and admirable, but the use of stereotyped terms and the many quoted texts have inflicted a sentimental tone upon the diction that will estrange discriminating readers but may please others.

A Poet's Fellowship, edited by A. E. Mackay, is a collection of poems whose authors have contributed to THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-day*. All of the poems have some distinguishing quality either of matter or manner, or, in the happiest instances, of both, so that they are very readable. Two of the women contributors (and they number five to three) appear to be the most fortunate in fusing these two fundamental constituents of poetry.... Julia Boynton Green and Nancy Pollock. The "Sonnet Suite" of the former, "Remorse," of the latter, call for special notice. Readers of THE POETRY REVIEW will welcome the reprint of Cyril G. Taylor's "The Mouse"... who could not be touched by the little tragedy?... Michael Roberts is most provocative in "Rugged Dawn"; A. E. Mackay is best represented by her "Earth to Sun"; Harold Moorhouse by his quietly descriptive "Sunset"; and Eleanor Norton by her "Sonnet to Shakespeare" (awarded a Silver Medal in the Memorial Competition). For quotation I have chosen the short "Manhattan Night: The City," by Ellen Coit Elliot, whose memorable POETRY REVIEW poem, "All the Women of the World were There," has gained a considerable vogue:—

So live a creature cannot sleep at night,
It still must beat
Tremendously its flaming hidden heart,
March its thund'rous feet.

It eats the silence. From the lit window lean
And hear it roar,
Like distant oceans booming on the cliffs
And trampling up the shore.

Interludes of an Editor, by Sir Owen Seaman (Constable, 7s. 6d. net), shows English light verse at its very finest, overflowing with wit as well as humour with never a touch of vulgarity, in peculiar contrast to English humorous verse at the opposite pole of culture, so generally bad and always vulgar. Sir Owen Seaman never forgets that an English literary man can also be a gentleman, and to him may be applied the tribute Lord Rosebery paid to Sir Frank Lockwood, "whose sunny humour brightened many lives." We would like to quote freely from his semi-topical verse with its very gentle touch of sarcasm, but there is another side to Sir Owen's muse, and one that is perhaps the more appealing to the poetry lover, and that is his graceful manner in paying tribute in verse to great men of our age on their passing. It would be singularly appropriate now to quote the beautiful and penetrating lines on George Meredith, but they are too many and should not be abbreviated, and instead we present our readers with the equally graceful tribute to Swinburne as one of the finest examples of the facility of Sir Owen's memorial art :

"What of the night?" For now his day is done,
And he, the herald of the red sunrise,
Leaves us in shadow even as when the sun
Sinks from the sombre skies.

High peer of Shelley, with the chosen few
He shared the secrets of Apollo's lyre,
Nor less from Dionysian altars drew
The god's authentic fire.

Last of our land's great singers, dowered at birth
With music's passion, swift and sweet and strong,
Who taught in heavenly numbers, new to earth,
The wizardry of song—

His spirit, fashioned after Freedom's mould,
Impatient of the bonds that mortals bear,
Achieves a franchise large and uncontrolled,
Rapt through the void of air.

"What of the night?" For him no night can be;
The night is ours, left songless and forlorn;
Yet o'er the darkness, where he wanders free,
Behold, a star is born!

Another Falernian associate and contributor to *Punch*, is R. C. Lehmann, whose selected verse (Blackwood, 5s. net) is among our autumn book delights. He pleases us not only by his fine humanity and his genial humour, but by his devotion to his animal friends. Mr. Alfred Noyes, who contributes a preface, declares that " Rufus is the best poem of its kind in the language : and if it had been written by Pope (who had not the necessary tenderness and sense of pity) it would have been acclaimed as the masterpiece it is," and we suggest that our readers, particularly those to whom the animal verse competition appeals, should read these heroic couplets and pass on to the other animal poems, including that on " Fluffy, a Cat " whose epitaph keeps in memory the tributary mound in her familiar garden ground :

" Here lies," we say, " from care released
A faithful, furry, friendly beast,
Responsive to the lightest word,
About these walks her purr was heard.
Love she received, for much she earned,
And much in kindness she returned.
Wherefore her comrades go not by
Her little grave without a sigh."

Mrs. H. Trevelyan-Thomson's *First Verses* (Roberts, 3s. 6d. net), range from stark narrative to very poignant and intimate self-expressions. The latter are undoubtedly the finer part of Mrs. Trevelyan-Thomson's work because they are actuated by a very real sincerity and tenderness as well as an instinct for the beautiful things and beautiful expressions, as are exemplified in the only one short piece, " Peace," that we can include in our necessarily brief notice :

What though the world indifferent be, and lost
Is all the dear delight of happier days,
And gone the one who gave to life its light.
Peace has not fled. The rapture of the spring,
—The breathless hush of early summer dawns,
—The magic of the moon behind the hill,
—The cloistered calm of dim cathedral woods. . . .
—The eternal stillness of the shining stars,
—The shining beauty of untrodden snow,
—The brooding peace of sleeping moors at dusk,
These are Earth's pastures green, her waters still.
All that one loved is lost, but there remains
—Thought ne'er again the path of joy be trod—
The Changelessness of God.

Prophets, Gods and Witches (Christophers, 5s.), is Anthony Crossley's second book. The earlier, *Aucassin and Nicolette*, was a promising

study in the romantic vein, with one or two smaller pieces which seemed already to foreshadow the transitional mode of the newer volume. Mr. Crossley has made very definite strides, both in technique and in mental approach to poetry as a serious art as against poetry as just a youthful surge of spirit. The two main poems in *Prophets, Gods and Witches* are " Elijah on Horeb " and " An Ode," written after a visit to the garden of the great sculptor, Carl Milles, at Lidingo, Stockholm, and they are definite achievements, with directness of presentation and amplitude of feeling, and a technique free from preciousness on the one hand and eccentricity on the other. " Elijah on Horeb " is written with some originality as to metre, though probably the choruses in Milton's *Samson Agonistes* suggested the norm of the verse-structure. The " Ode " is more typical in style, but its continual emotion keeps it free from any mere traditionalism. Of the other poems in the book " A Van Gogh Rhapsody " and a sonnet, " Twilight Over Buda," show a power of objective feeling that should develop, in the poet's future work, on large lines. More especially, a brief and epical fragment, " Mycenae and Eleusis," is a poem packed with good lines and sensitive interplay of rhythms, and its concentration, deeper than anywhere else in Mr. Crossley's work, is as good evidence as could be brought forward that this is a poet to watch.

The Rawnsley Memorial Gold Medal

The family of the late Mr. W. F. Rawnsley, in conjunction with the Council of the Poetry Society (Incorporated), have endowed an annual gold medal to be competed for within the Society by readers of poetry, constituting a most appropriate memorial to the first Life Member and for many years the Elder Councillor, and for several years the devoted President of the Society, who was particularly concerned with the reading of poetry and went about giving readings.

The medal, which has been specially designed, is competed for annually at a public reading held in London. Owing to delay in entering into possession of new premises, the 1929 medal competition will not be held until January.

Any member of The Poetry Society may enter. It is suggested that Centres in particular should compete, arranging a preliminary competition within each for the selection of representative readers. Schools associated with the Society may also send up one or more representative competitors.

All competitors, whether local or general, will be required to pay an entrance fee of 10s., out of which the expenses of the competition, other than the cost of the Medal, will be met.

On sending in their entries to the local or general secretary not later than January 1st, competitors must notify the poem or selection from a poem they intend to read and supply a copy of the words. Each reading should not take more than five minutes.

THE HUMAN EYE

THINK not to find a friend where you perceive
A welcome on the lips. Traitors may smile,
Setting their well-schooled muscles to deceive—
'Twas with a kiss that Judas did beguile.
Nor trust to words, a hypocrite may teach
His servile tongue to speak with moving art.
Of all redeeming virtues he will preach,
And hide with honeyed phrase a callous heart.
But hypocrite or traitor never can
Command complete obedience of his eyes,
Through them th' imprisoned soul, greater than man,
Looks out upon the World and never lies.
Seek there alone—if what you find is pure
Give then your friendship: trust, and rest secure.

ETHEL BRÉE.

II

SIGHT'S first prerogative is not to close
Beauty of birds or leopards' flexuous grace
Within the brain's dark fastness; limn the face
Of human-kind, or grant to us the rose.

But—lest we, by immediacy oppressed,
Hemmed in by touch and taste, by scent and sound,
Should miss life's largeness; self-perplexed, self-bound,
Self-weary, should attain from self no rest—

To bring us distances; the cloudy shapes
Of hills far off; domed skies' embrace of seas;
Horizons' hintings at infinities;
Swift Hermes of the senses, sight escapes

The very bounds of earth—her bonds, her bars,
And, daring gulfs from which thought, dizzied, stays,
Brings to us at the close of every day's
Earth-shackled wanderings, the spacious stars!

N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

AUTUMN LEAVES.

UNDERNEATH the bushes
The lost leaves lie
Waiting for the Winter
To bid them die,
Waiting for the snowflakes
To come flocking down
And cover up
Their gold and brown.

Underneath the bushes
The dead leaves lie;
Breezes in the thicket
Whisper and sigh;
Branches quiver
And brown twigs quake;

Down within the hard buds
The new leaves wake.

SYLVIA DOBSON.

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S CAUSERIE

We have had a delightful revival of the short lyric—direct, simple, perfectly phrased, concentrated on emotion or aspect and intensely individual. From a considerable group illustrating these qualities in various ways we select eight by Rosalind de Bunsen, G. W. Eustace, Silvia Dobson, Beatrice Eve, Winifred Bourne, A. Doris L. Wilson, Violet Gillespie and Morwyth Rhys, vivid and colourful or starkly realistic, which particularly deserve recognition, and we highly commend contributions received from Vera Arlett (whose new volume of poems, containing " A Pennyworth of Magic " and other charming POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of To-Day* poems, has just been published by Alston Rivers), E. Allcock, Lampton; E. T. Whiffen, New York; Eleanor Norton, London, W.; D. M. Hill, Wolverhampton; Dulcie Eden Greville, Silcoates; Audrey Bell, Broadstairs; E. Foxall, Wirrall; E. F. Alden, Haddenham; John Silver, Norwich; A MacCarthy Hickey, New York; D. Berners Wilson, Abergavenny; E. O. Neill Beiley, Harpenden; Ida S. Groom, Clifton; M. A. Woodward, Portland; Enid Jones, Leeds; E. Lambard Squires, Richmond; and B. M. Skeat, Sedbergh.

The following are commended for one or another poem of quality. marred occasionally by a feeble phrase or an inconsequent conclusion or a trite or clumsy line; or more frequently by a too pedestrian evenness:

E. Brée, London; E. A. Cullabine, Worksop; J. M. Dougall, Hereford; M. Munsterberg, Brookline; Vera Tomlinson, Howden; E. Samms, Luton; M. Pollard, Worthing; Arthur Tribe, Rusthall; Irvine Gray, Cairo; G. E. Merrick, Warminster; I. Kemsley, Rochester; L. Talfourd Jones, Purley; John Purdie, Paisley; A. Marryner, Ramsgate; P. M. Goodman, Walberswick; G. M. Wilson, Norwich; L. D. Mills, Northampton; E. L. Kinlock, Glasgow; M. A. Rowland, Eastbourne; N. Lennox, N. Kensington; F. Miller, London, W.C.; Redcliffe McKie, Brighton; A. M. Waters, Chepstow; Michael Flint, Catterick; Sydney Snell, London, N.W.; D. Whyl, London, W.; P. O'Donnell, Burnham; A. Smith, Wanstead; John Carstairs, London, W.; Ismay Trimble, Tankerton; W. K. Lewis, Ramsgate; Felicity Ray, Bedford; Aline Howard, London, S.W.; A. E. Dewey, Wandsworth; J. W. Anderson, Skegness; E. M. Walker, Bournemouth; Ierne Ormsby, Croydon, and E. M. Fison, Felixstowe.

The " Human Eye " was not found to be a very inspiring theme. A number of contributors, like St. Paul, wandered away from the original subject, or treated it too definitely. On the other hand, we have a number of poems that in one way or another express Mr. Lewis' wishes when choosing the subject. In one respect or another, either epigrammatically or precisely, poetically or scientifically, they

defined the significance and qualities of the Human Eye. In consequence, we divide Mr. Lewis' gift between the following :—

Lilly E. F. Barry, Montreal;
Ethel Brée, Chancery Lane, W.C.;
A. Gordon Eddison, London, S.W.;
Mabel Posegate, Cincinnati, Ohio;
N. K. Cruikshanks, Bury, Lancs;
Nancy Jane French, Bradford, Pa.;
K. O'Neill-Bailey, Harpenden.

Very close to the above come :—

Dolores Kersey, Marion, Indiana;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing;
Francis E. Hodder, Catterick, S.O.;
John Purdie, Paisley;
Evelyn Couchman, Rickmansworth.

whom we highly commend for thoughtful, carefully expressed poems. We should also mention contributions by :—

Bertha Annakin, Wetherby;
Edith Mirick, Washington, D.C.;
Emma B. King, Indianapolis;
Henry L. Dixon, Warminster;
Mrs. Berridge, Little Baddow;
F. V. Luxmoore, Burnham-on-Sea;
Ethel Holdsworth, Luddendenfoot.

We give further contributions to the plebiscite on POETRY REVIEW poems, to which various American papers are contributing by printing poems from each issue of THE POETRY REVIEW :

The Hon. Mrs. Garton : Among the poems I have enjoyed in THE POETRY REVIEW beyond all others, are (1) " Happy Playmate of the Flowers," (2) " On a Picture of the Death of Procris," and (3) " Forgotten Soldiers," the latter by " Helen Reedley," and another as beautiful by the same poet, the title of which I am not quite certain of, namely, " An old woman hearing a thrush sing." I consider that any of these especially the first, second and last named, would grace any collection—both touching and beautiful and scholarly.

Miss Vera Arlett : I am much interested in the selection of " Poems I have enjoyed " from contributions to THE POETRY REVIEW. I think " York Minster " (*Seven Sisters*) by John Saber, in this month's magazine is very fine, and very musical in expression. I also like " The Little Lane " (A. D. L. Wilson, September, 1927),—an exquisite little poem. All animal lovers (including myself!) would be grateful for " Prayer for the Hunted " (D. Henderson, September, 1926) and " Prayer for a Departed Cat " (L. A. Fowler, May, 1926).

Miss Grace Turrill suggests the inclusion of " Ode to a Night Jar," by Wallace B. Nichols, and also " Words,"—" There are lonely words: one is merciful."

Miss Amy Eddison, who is an authority on the supernatural in poetry, writes : I enclose a short list of short poems that I particularly like for various reasons. I am not quite sure *how* short a " short poem " must be—there are many *portions* of the longer poems that I prefer to any of these—but a long poem (amateur or not !) is seldom of sustained excellence—so on the whole these *quite* short ones are preferable ! Vol. XX, No. 1, " Mortality," by B. S. Wagstaff; Vol.

XIX, No. 2, "Hardy, the Compassionate," by Y. M. Loper; Vol. XIX, No. 6, "Sleep," by Eva Dobell; Vol. XVIII, No. 6, "Great Spaces," by Caro L. Lanyon; Vol. XVIII, No. 4, "Some Small Love Greatly," by B. Smythe; Vol. XVII, No. 3, "Prayer for a Departed Cat," by L. A. Fowler; Vol. XVII, No. 3, "Two Roads," by M. Y. Hamilton; Vol. XVII, No. 4, "Sea-Song," by B. Smythe.

Miss Marianne Clarke of St. Cloud, Minnesota, turns attention to prose: I want you to know that the article by J. Charles Davis, published in September-October, November-December, 1928, POETRY REVIEW, called "The Poet's Soul," I consider one of the most inspiring and most realistic that I have ever been so fortunate as to have had the pleasure of reading, in this line of thought, not only philosophical but far-reaching, and with scholarly reference to immortal minds, imparting the truth.

Mrs. Madeline Alston, whose contributions to the POETRY REVIEW on William Canton and Poetry and Children will be remembered by all readers, presents the rich harvest of a quiet and cultivated eye and brain in her collection of essays, *From an Old Cape Homestead* (Lane, 6s.), including some papers on English and South African poets.

Another contributor, Mrs. Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, has issued through the same famous house a collection of poems for children for the penning of which Mrs. Ratcliffe has a whimsical knack. This season is not likely to produce anything more attractive than "Night Lights."

We congratulate another South African associate, the Rev. A. Vine Hall, on the third edition of his *Poems of a South African* (Longmans, 10s. 6d.). He too has a large, vivid section "for boys and girls," in which his knowledge of South African scenes and life is effectively utilised.

A POET-NOVELIST WRITES FROM EXPERIENCE:

Brittle Glory, by Wallace B. Nichols (Ward Lock, 7s. 6d.), is the graphic, gripping story of another beloved if perverse vagabond, Nicholas Marr, a disillusioned painter of genius. Our readers may follow with pleasure and advantage the second excursion into fiction of the author of *Prometheus in Piccadilly* and *Jericho Street*. They will find too, something of professional or poetic interest not only in the felicity of the story, but also in certain portions in which a young poet-friend of the artist bewails his lot in words which relate a common experience:

"I've no readers, no audience; the c-critics ignore me; my f-friends smile about me," said the poet, and he sat down beside the painter on the models' daïs. "The only chance I g-get of being heard is in a translation from someone else. My own original work never gets a hearing; it falls from the P-Press into the gutter." His stammer was all the more pronounced in his dislocation of spirit.

"I know; I know," murmured Marr. "It makes one think we

must be the real thing, Mortimer," he added in grim jest. "It's always the idols of the next generation who find their own so difficult to reach."

"How can one get behind the silence?" asked the poet. "One sends one's book out for review, p-probably f-fifty copies of it. It gets about t-ten notices—and those only in the p-provincial papers. The sole result of sending g-gratis copies to the chief London p-papers, d-daily or weekly, is to find them, in about a f-fortnight, here and there in Charing Cross Road with their leaves still uncut and the p-publisher's slip left inside! What can one do about it? It's a barrier that needs b-bombing down, only one hasn't the b-bombs. I know there are too many books being published, and I know the eternal c-cry of 'no space,' but . . . what m-malicious Rhadamantus d-decides which shall be taken and which left? The fates of good books are a tragi-c-comedy written by that amateur dramatist named Chance. I'm not c-complaining of the critic; he's been shied at too often. I'm complaining of the b-blank wall."

"You've got to pull strings nowadays, not strike 'em," said Marr.

"There's a v-verse epigram something like that by Sir William Watson," answered the poet. "It's quite true. And to p-pull strings you need the g-gifts of the gab, consumate cheek, and the social f-flair—things in which the real artist usually is wanting."

"We're a stigmatic tribe," muttered the painter.

"S-sometimes I wonder if it's worth g-going on at all," moodily went on Mortimer.

"It isn't," said Marr. "I chucked it once, and I'm going to chuck it again."

"How? Alas, once a p-poet, curse it, always a p-poet."

"Even a poet, Mortimer, is a creature of freewill—if he's only cynical enough. Turn your back on it all, as I did. I was a fool to return to the haunts of the high-brows—who have neither generosity nor vision, but only brilliance and county connections. But I've learnt my lesson now. I'm going off to wander about again. The only life in which in these days you can keep your self-respect is one without either aims or hopes. To aim is to deceive yourself; to hope is to be deceived by others."

Mortimer shook his head. "I can't believe that," he said. "Though it racks my n-nerves and sours my thoughts, I'm too full of v-vanity" —and he laughed ingenuously—"to g-give up the b-bare chance of winning out in the end."

Our friend discusses poetic drama with a sympathetic actress who says, "So much blank verse, outside Shakespeare, seems to be written more for the eye than the tongue—a great mistake. Poets ought to read their verse aloud to themselves before printing it." The poet asserted "The p-present-day stage doesn't want blank verse."

"I admit there's a prejudice against it," replied Noella.

"A st-stupid p-prejudice. I believe a good play in blank v-verse—

if not advertised as such and if not put on with high-brow s-solemnity —would go just as well as a g-good one in prose. But it never gets the ch-chance. A *good* play's one that holds the audience; if it holds the audience, why b-bother whether it's in p-prose or b-blank verse."

"It isn't every player who can speak blank verse, Mr. Mortimer," said Noella seriously.

"I know—but an artist should take the t-trouble to learn the t-technique of his art," Mortimer answered.

"How few of us are artists!" sighed Noella.

"It's all, as I s-said, a matter of p-prejudice," went on the poet. "And the p-prejudice isn't confined to the p-player or the m-manager; it runs riot in the audiences, t-too. That's why I say that a p-play in blank verse shouldn't be advertised as in b-blank verse."

Noella smiled in the darkness. "Would that really make much difference?" she asked sceptically.

"May I tell you of an instance in my own kn-knowledge?" said the poet. "A few months ago I was acting as p-producer to an amateur repertory company," Mortimer began, with that lessening stammer which always accompanied his more fully-absorbed interest. "Amongst the plays we did during our small season were two in blank verse—neither of them m-mine, by the way. After the performance of the f-first we put on, a lady who'd been in the audience, and whom I didn't know, came behind to tell me how much she'd enjoyed it, saying, among other things, how c-completely it had held her. In the course of conversation I mentioned that the play, as well as being good d-drama, was also good p-poetry, and one of the performers, who happened to be st-standing near, said he'd found b-blank verse much easier to remember and to sp-speak than he'd expected. I shall never forget the look on the lady's f-face. 'Was it in blank verse?' she asked. 'Yes,' I answered. 'Oh!' was all she could f-find to reply. She seemed almost horrified to learn she'd found b-blank verse enjoyable!

"When, a few months later, we performed the other p-play in blank verse," continued the poet, "that lady didn't come to see it. Her excuse was that 'poetry is so dull!' Yet when she'd not known it was p-poetry to which she'd been listening she'd thoroughly enjoyed it. In the face of these d-devastating prejudices, is it any wonder," said Mortimer, half angrily, "that the undoubted recent renaissance in the general appreciation of poetry should have been more f-favourable to the lyric and n-narrative forms than to the d-dramatic? The p-poet turns from the dramatic f-form to another—almost any other—out of sh-sheer weariness at having perpetually to wage a hopeless b-battle with m-managements and audiences. No one will p-produce poetry on the stage, nor will p-people go to listen to it in sufficient numbers to make it pr-profitable if it were, by a rare ch-chance to *be* produced. Why should the poet, who is rather a s-sensitive person, lay himself

unnecessarily open to c-continual disappointment? His other d-disadvantages in a none too appreciative world are quite s-sufficient. Is it any more unnatural," proceeded Mortimer, "to write in terms of b-blank verse than in t-terms of harmony and c-counterpoint? Beethoven could, no doubt, have expressed his f-feelings about Theresa von Brunswick in a few sentences of bare p-prose; but he expressed them in the m-multitudinous notes of the Fifth Symphony. Is the Fifth S-symphony unnatural?"

Mr. Nichols is an authority on these matters: he writes from experience. We must quote another pertinent passage. The artist, speaking of Shakespeare, declares:

"To-day, as a new poet, he'd not be reckoned among the first five; he'd be called rhetorical and not modern enough. How these moderns jib at the fine phrase! And half of Shakespeare is fine phrasing. We only admire Shakespeare in perspective. The Georgians don't believe in largeness of design, or greatness of spirit; they neglect the big brush; they niggle. They're afraid of inspiration; they take it watered. If a man produces something on the big lines —as you have, my friend—they either ignore it or dismiss it as old-fashioned. Both Shakespeare and Milton would have the devil's own job even to get heard nowadays. They wouldn't be meat for the gossip columns; they'd not fit into any literary 'group'; they'd not have the social pull that counts so damnably much. They'd be condemned to plough their lonely furrows and be relegated to the last pages of *The Times Literary Supplement*. Then one day the harvest would come, and everyone would rub astonished eyes and be pricked in the wind because none of 'em could cry, 'I told you so!'"—The poet laughed. "That phantom, Herr Wilhelm von Shakespeare, lectured upon at universities, m-might be angry at it all," he said. "But I don't f-fancy Will Shakespeare, p-player and p-poet, would c-care a half-penny. One would think," he added, turning to the man beside him, "that you believed the p-poet writes only for applause. Do you p-paint only for applause?"

* * *

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor," the Poet's Fellowship, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, before December 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, or international coupon, and, if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

Mr. Charles Alva Lane repeats his challenging offer for the most "profound" poem, dealing with the hidden walls of fact and feeling, and their strange inter-relation in the lives of men.—See pages 358 and 375.

Mr. Lane's prize is $100. The contest is open to all, and will close May 15th next. Manuscripts should be typed, and the name and address of the authors written on the upper left corner, and addressed to Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, Convener, 299 Park Avenue, New York. All poems must be original. No poems will be returned, and the unplaced MSS are the property of the authors after the contest is closed and prizes awarded.

Mr. Arthur A. Paul follows the excellent example of Mr. Lewis and provides a premium of three guineas for "Conscience." "I am all in favour of originality of theme. On this account I think a poetical narrative drama in three acts is worth consideration, each stanza to represent an act, which must rhyme. It can be either Comedy or Tragedy. Each stanza or act should contain not more than three dozen lines, the plot to be original, not too true to life, but of perfect construction." MSS. should be addressed "The Paul Premium, THE POETRY REVIEW Office." Closing date November 25th.

Miss M. L. Nott, who has been associated actively with The Poetry Society since its formation, and is a prominent member of the Bristol Branch of the League for the Prohibition of Cruel Sports, provides a premium of two guineas for a poem or poems against "Blood Sports" about which many of our contributors must feel very deeply and warmly and be able to express themselves with eloquent and bitter fervour and indignation. We want a companion to Ralph Hodgson's well-known little lyric. We make no conditions as to length or style of treatment (except that "free verse" is barred), and shall be glad to receive poems up to November 20th, addressed "The Nott Premium," THE POETRY REVIEW Office.

THE LATE FLORENCE LEDERER.

Memory plays strange tricks at times when we attempt to recall the portrait of a friend. We remember details, characteristics, certain inflections of voice, glimpses of personality revealed through conversation, but personality as a whole eludes us. Perhaps to-day is responsible, to some extent, for blurred outline and vague impression, since friendship, above all, requires leisure, and where in the world is leisure to be found? But the memory of Florence Lederer comes back to us neither vague nor elusive but clear in every detail, a complete portrait of one who was both artist and seeker to the end. For she never wasted anything of herself on vain pursuits nor frittered away her gifts to the four winds. Her life was essentially a quest and her attitude is best summed up in these few lines taken from a little book of prose poems[1] full of the glowing imagery of the east:

"The Beloved is veiled by seventy thousand veils. No hint, no glimmer of His celestial radiance can thus be seen, or guessed at by profane and doubting souls.

"But all these veils must be removed, some with deep pain and

[1] *Seventy Thousand Veils*, by Florence Lederer (London: J. M. Watkins).

tribulation, others with joy and gladness ere the pilgrim gains the outer gates of Paradise."

Outwardly a shy, retiring woman of some reserve, she gave rare measure to the few who were privileged to know her. One became increasingly aware that she herself was a microcosm reflecting her own ideal, that there were veils beyond veils . . . even her gaiety had depth, coming from the deep well-springs of joy in life and creation. The influence of the East, quickened by her extensive travels, drew her inevitably into mysticism of the apprehensive type, which visions and feels through intuition. Rather later than most of us she took up the study of an oriental language, and acquitted herself brilliantly in Persian at the London School of Oriental Languages. *The Secret Rose Garden of Sa'D Ud Din* in the Wisdom of the East Series, was the outcome of these studies. It is a treasure house of beautiful things, a little masterpiece of transmutation from East to West. In recent years many of her poems appeared in *Poetry of To-day*. One given on page 86 of No. 2 for 1929 is almost the last—indeed perhaps the last—she ever wrote. It is called " Three Scenes " and conveys to the reader some idea of her worship of natural beauty and feeling for colour :—

'Tis said that when the dying pass
As the last breath sighs itself away
All in a beat of time the past life
Flashes by, scene after scene
As in a picture show.

If so, before my eyes may pass again
Three scenes of haunting loveliness
Dearest of all my memory holds.

The three scenes are " White dawn on the Himalayan snows," " Blue moon on the misty isle of Skye," " Red sunset on the jagged Aden peaks." Those who loved and remembered her may rest assured of a wish fulfilled.

* * *

John Freeman, who died in September at Anerley, where he had been a near neighbour of Walter de la Mare for some years, was accounted by some competent critics a greater poet than many of his contemporaries more prone to self-advertisement. He was attached to a narrow school and also had the gift of reticence. His reputation based on the collected volume of his poems published by Messrs. Macmillan is likely to grow stronger and attain a degree of permanence denied to his more volatile fellow " Georgians."

* * *

" Lines that have Influenced Me."

To the Editor of The Poetry Review.

Sir,—All readers of The Poetry Review must be acquainted

with a poem or rather lines of poems of singular power or poignancy which have influenced them exceptionally. It would be interesting and valuable if they would contribute to a symposium of memorable lines. For myself, I have been powerfully affected, especially in times of storm and stress and uncertainty, by the words of Browning's "Paracelsus":

> "I go to prove my soul!
> I see my way as birds their trackless way.
> I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
> I ask not: but unless God send his hail
> Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
> In some time, His good time, I shall arrive:
> He guides me and the bird!"

Yours, K.C.B.

* * *

The Stage Society and the Three Hundred Club started their season early with an exceptionally strong programme, opening on October 20th at the Prince of Wales Theatre, with *Belle, or What's the Bother*, by Ernest George, a comedy of the East End of London, written from first-hand knowledge. The programme contained a glossary of many strange words and lively phrases. Their next production will be *Doumaumont*, by Eberhard Wolfgang Möller (in an English version written by Graham and Tristan Rawson), recently produced with great success in Germany, dealing with the psychology of a German soldier who, unlike the civilians around him, cannot put the war out of mind. The third play will be *Forty-Seven*, by Sydney Loch—a drama concerned with the struggle between the Sinn Feiners and the "Black and Tans," provisionally dated February 2nd, 1930. The Three Hundred Club production will be announced later. The Society has been forced, rather reluctantly we expect, to re-organize its machinery, and under its new Chairman is being galvanized into fresh life, but still adhering to its old policy of not producing a play because of its commercial value, or that it will not pass the Censor, but because it is of dramatic and literary interest. The new Hon. Sec. is Mrs. Gwladys Wheeler, who directed our recent dramatic recital of *Harold*.

* * *

Among the Lectures and Classes for Teachers arranged by the L.C.C. for this winter are lectures on poetry by Miss Edith Sitwell and Mr. Humbert Wolfe; on English Poetry from the beginning to Spenser by Professor Sir Israel Gollancz; and on the Teaching and Speaking of English by Dr. J. H. Jagger and Professor J. Dover Wilson.

* * *

Miss Edith Evans will again act as adjudicator at the Autumn Examination for the Poetry Society's Gold Medal for Verse-Speaking on November 26th. Members and others who wish to attend this Recital should apply for tickets to the General Secretary at 16 Featherstone Buildings, W.C.1.

TWO CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS

I. POOR FOLK'S CAROL.

WE who be poor folk
Come praying that ye
May never bear the yoke
Of our lady Poverty.

Greetings, good gentles,
And bless ye one and all:
For he who bears a blessing
Is the richest of all.

II. The Holy Miracle

There hung a star above an inn.
The Child of Heaven lay within.

The oxen lowed within their stall,
While angels sang in madrigal.

Little white lambs did shyly peep
Upon the Lamb of God, asleep.

A maiden's Child was brought to birth.
Wisdom Incarnate trod this earth.

O dark earth, fling your windows wide
And let the Light of Heaven inside!

VIOLET GILLESPIE.

EYES

WHO would follow Sylvia through the golden dawn?
Carrying a star-stick, gracile as a faun,
From the rim of shadows to the edge of day,
Who would follow Sylvia on her golden way?

Amber eyes are burnished, expectant and alight,
Flotillas cast on a lily-pool cut from dreams at night,
Cut and measured with a rule, tinted with a rose,
But who would measure patterns where the arum lily blows?

Casting with her bait for Love who comes on naked feet,
Crushing blossoms between his toes, grasses 'neath his feet,
How the hours are lonely, now that Love has gone,
Read a verse, say a prayer, push the day along—
He should leave a kinder gift than a shroud all torn,
Blowing in a winter's wind, fastened to a thorn.

Now the star-stick's broken, burnished fires are gone,
See the eyes are weary—Sylvia has withdrawn.

NANCY JANE FRENCH.

[End of Volume XX]